

Your True -
Friend -
Hugh Main -

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MEMORIALS
OF THE LATE
HUGH MAIR, D.D.
(SERMONS, ADDRESSES, &c.)

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written, was upright, even words of truth.—Ecc. l. xii. 10.

COMPILED WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY

ALEX. DINGWALL FORDYCE,
FERGUS, ONTARIO.



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NOTES

1911

The first of the series of lectures was given by Mr. J. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of mechanics. The second lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of relativity. The third lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the atom. The fourth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the universe. The fifth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the future. The sixth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the past. The seventh lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the present. The eighth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the world. The ninth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human mind. The tenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human body. The eleventh lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human soul. The twelfth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human spirit. The thirteenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human heart. The fourteenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human brain. The fifteenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human eye. The sixteenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human ear. The seventeenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human nose. The eighteenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human mouth. The nineteenth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human hand. The twentieth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human foot. The twenty-first lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human leg. The twenty-second lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human arm. The twenty-third lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human back. The twenty-fourth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human neck. The twenty-fifth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human head. The twenty-sixth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human face. The twenty-seventh lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human hair. The twenty-eighth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human skin. The twenty-ninth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human blood. The thirtieth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human bones. The thirty-first lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human muscles. The thirty-second lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human nerves. The thirty-third lecture was given by Mr. H. 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Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human interactions. The forty-second lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human connections. The forty-third lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human associations. The forty-fourth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human combinations. The forty-fifth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human permutations. The forty-sixth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human combinations. The forty-seventh lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human permutations. The forty-eighth lecture was given by Mr. H. Poincaré on the subject of the foundations of the theory of the human combinations. 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PREFACE.

THE appearance, after the lapse of twenty-two years, of a supplementary volume of discourses by one who was comparatively so little known as the late Reverend Dr. Mair, requires some explanation.

For seven years previous to his lamented death, I had enjoyed more frequent intercourse with him, I believe, than anyone else beyond his own family. I had shared, with many others, a high esteem and regard for himself, and appreciation of his abilities and worth, and on his death, had been entrusted with the custody of the bulk of his discourses. Their perusal suggested to me the publication of a selection of his sermons, accompanied by a short sketch of his life. Old and valued friends of his own encouraged the idea, and rendered very material aid in carrying it out successfully. The work came out in the spring of 1856, and was well received. It, like the present, was published by subscription, and consequently its circulation was in a great measure confined to those quarters where he had laboured for a quarter of a century, or to brethren in the ministry who had been intimately acquainted with him. The fact that several were dis-

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appointed of copies of the work, induced me to contemplate the publication of another edition, or of an additional selection with fuller biographical sketch and likeness, the want of which in the first selection had been regretted by some old friends, one of whom observed that "Dr. Mair's countenance indicated much of his mind." The preparation of such a supplementary volume was, however, inevitably delayed in consequence of my unexpectedly entering, in the month of August, 1856, on duties which increased in extent each succeeding year, and effectually prevented the fulfilment of the design. It was not till the month of June last, that the barrier I have alluded to was removed, and I was left free to carry out this long cherished desire. For several reasons, however, it was at a disadvantage; general financial depression; a most unpropitious harvest in the part of Ontario in which Dr. Mair had resided, and the diminution in the course of years of a number who had taken an interest in the former publication; and, I may add also, of some very old friends who could have furnished particulars respecting his early days, and his first years in the Ministry.

The sermon on "Spiritual Insensibility," had evidently been written just before its delivery. It was preached at Fergus on the first October, 1854, and as it was the last he ever preached, is included in

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this volume, notwithstanding its having had a place in the former selection.

The sermon on the "Love of Christ" was the first he delivered at Fergus; this was on the first of August, 1847; it had been intended at one time as a contribution to a volume of sermons by ministers of the Church, for use in destitute localities; and the summer before his death, he had resolved to allow it to appear in the "Montreal Presbyterian," for which a communication had been asked. He had revised it for the purpose, and a part appeared in two numbers before his death, the concluding portion in the very number in which the sad event was announced.

The particulars given by the Rev. Dr. Sprague and Professor Lewis, at the close of the general narrative, will be found of much interest. Like him whose character and habits, and even peculiarities, they have so faithfully, yet lovingly, delineated, they have both now passed within the veil, and entered on the inheritance that passeth not away. A short notice in the Appendix, of these eminent and able men, I have no doubt will be acceptable.

The friend, whose recollections under the signature of L. E. M., are also given, I have been unable to identify.

The Biographical Sketch is unavoidably much shorter than I should have desired, and it may be thought that undue prominence has been given in it

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to the period of Dr. Mair's life and ministry which was passed at Fergus. All I can say is, that it was the only period I had any special knowledge of; and, that, as his practice was in one sphere of labour, so it may have been always and everywhere. For the same reason, many warm and devoted friends were no doubt to be found wherever he labored, and yet, one of the very last he knew has been selected for special notice in the Appendix. Taken in connection, however, with all the circumstances as given in the narrative, I trust it may not be thought out of place; and that the *notice* of another family of his own name may not be considered devoid of interest.

A. DINGWALL FORDYCE.

FERGUS, ONT., 30th November, 1878.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

It might have been interesting in connection with a short sketch of the life of the subject of these Memorials, to have been able to have given some particulars respecting his forefathers, besides a few bare facts. I have understood that they belonged to the farming class of the community, although his father's life was spent in very different pursuits.

The name of Mair is not at all uncommon in the neighbourhood of his birth place, families of the same name being found there, in no wise related to each other.

Dr. Mair's parents, Archibald Campbell Mair and Janet Woodburn, were both natives of the village of Newmilns, in Ayrshire. The former had probably entered the army at an early period of his life. At his death on the 18th June, 1854, at the age of 79, he had been for many years a Captain in the 27th regiment. His widow survived till the 27th Nov., 1867, when she died at the age of 89. I may observe that Capt. Mair was the son of Hugh Mair and Fanny Campbell, the former of whom died on the 11th May, 1803, at the age of 60, and was buried at Newmilns; while his widow lived to watch over her grandchild during the absence of his parents, and faithfully fulfilled the trust. She died 23rd April, 1818, at the age of 73.

Hugh Mair, the author of the Discourses contained in this volume, was born on the 16th July, 1797. He was the oldest child of Captain and Mrs. Mair, and we are told that in his tender years, he was

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watched over with Christian solicitude by his paternal grandmother, his mother accompanying her husband to the Continent during the war.

The Parish of Loudoun, in which Newmilns is situated, is famed for its rich and varied scenery, and distinguished besides, as the birth place of no fewer than three martyrs to the cause of religious freedom during the days of persecution in Scotland. It may have been with Hugh Mair, as it was with his friend the Rev. Dr. Bruce, of whom his biographer observes, that the scenery of "Loudoun's bonny woods and braes" was his daily delight, and that the memories of Wallace and of the Scottish Covenanters, which cluster round Loudoun Hill, helped to keep alive his patriotic and religious enthusiasm." It was remarked of Dr. Mair by his friend Dr. Sprague, that in him, "the imaginative faculty was strongly developed, and rendered him always at home amidst scenes of both natural and moral grandeur." May not this development have been due in a considerable degree, to the scenery and associations of his early boyhood and youth?

At the age of eight years he was sent to school at the neighbouring Town of Kilmarnock, but this was only for one year. After that, and till the age of 14, his studies were pursued nearer home, under an excellent classical teacher of the name of Campbell. I have not learned at what time he first publicly professed his faith in Christ, but it must have been before he reached the age of 19, as in 1855 the Rev. Dr. Bruce, of Newmilns, wrote of him, "Nearly forty years ago when I was ordained to the pastoral charge of the Secession congregation here, I found him a member of the society, and from that time

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till the period of his death, he and I felt towards one another, as attached friends."

It might have been interesting to have known what had led to his connecting himself with the Secession Church, in preference to the Church of Scotland, to which his parents belonged. Doubtless he had sufficient reasons as he judged for this step, whatever they were. For almost a century previous to 1872, when Dr. Bruce died, the Secession Church at Newmilns had no more than two ministers; these were both faithful, earnest, good men, so that the religious privileges he enjoyed from his earliest years, were eminently calculated to mould his character aright; and to these, after six years' study at the University of Glasgow, were added the judicious and able instructions, accompanied by the fervent piety of the Rev. Dr. Paxton, Professor of Divinity to the General Associate Synod, with whom he studied theology for three years, and whose daily prayers, morning and evening, in his class, we are told, "were so varied, so appropriate, and so full of unction, as to solemnize the students' minds, and make them feel what it was really to plead with God."

After the Union took place between the Burgher and Anti-burgher Synods of the Secession Church in 1820, the theological course of the subject of this sketch was carried on until its close, at Glasgow, under the Rev. John Dick, who was the sole professor for several years to the United Associate Synod. Dr. Dick's intellectual excellence is said to have been chiefly remarkable in clear conceptions which were united in him with acuteness and a sound judgment, "so that he instinctively rejected all ob-

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scure and dubious ideas, shunning entirely some departments of human research, or, when he entered upon them, employing himself in ascertaining where enquiry ceased to satisfy, and in pointing out to others the limits of the human faculties." How greatly Dr. Mair had benefited by the instructions received alike from the one and the other professor under whom he studied, will be acknowledged, I believe, by all who knew him.

About the year 1823 he was licensed to preach the Gospel by the United Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh. For some time afterwards, he was employed in missionary work in the Orkney Islands and elsewhere in Scotland. Without definite information on the subject, it might perhaps be assumed that, but for his connection with the Secession Church, his steps might never have been directed to the New World, which appears, at that time, to have opened up a field of labour to many students of that Church, by whom, from various causes, permanent work in their native land was unattainable. One of these causes might be the greater number of probationers coming forward year after year than there were vacancies for them to fill, the inadequate support that could be offered, and the comparatively short interval that had elapsed since the Separation, causing points of difference to assume larger proportions than happily they do in our day, when interchange of charges with other Presbyterian bodies, is not altogether unknown, although unanimity in all respects has not yet been reached. It seems to me not at all unlikely that difficulties arising from some of the causes now suggested, might have led to communication with fellow-stu-

dents who had actually crossed the Atlantic, and who were labouring in the United States, and that this might have had some influence in inducing him to follow them there. At all events, I find that an intimate and dear friend, who had died the year before he left Scotland, had been settled over a congregation, not very far removed from the first to which he was called when he arrived in America. It was in the year 1828 that he left his native land, and shortly after he arrived in the United States he was installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Churches at Fort Miller and Northumberland. The charge lies on the River Hudson in the State of New York, from 30 to 40 miles beyond Albany. Life-long friendships were formed during his residence here, short as it was. Having remained one year, he received a call to Ballston Centre, and also to Johnstown, both in the same State. He chose the latter as his sphere of labour, and early in 1830 he was settled at Johnstown, where he prosecuted his ministry faithfully and laboriously for 14 years, and then only moved to other fields, to return to breathe his last among his former flock ten years after.

It may not be amiss to introduce here the description Dr. Sprague gives of Dr. Mair's appearance in his *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. iv. p 745: "His personal appearance was not greatly in his favour. He was a short, thick-set man, rather inclined to corpulency, with his head but little elevated above his shoulders, and altogether looking as if he were specially liable to die of apoplexy. Indeed, he had been troubled for many years by a determination of blood to his head; and both himself and his

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friends were apprehensive that it boded a sudden death. His face had nothing of refinement; but there was a strong, thoughtful, and withal, modest expression, that could hardly fail to excite interest."

On the 29th of April, 1832, he was united in marriage to Maria Harriet Metcalf, of Northumberland, daughter of William Metcalf, of the same place, whose grandmother, Abigail Edwards, wife of William Metcalf, of Lebanon, was a sister of the eminently pious and able theologian and preacher, Dr. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey, the well-known author of the *History of Redemption*, *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will*, and other valuable works. Mrs. Mair's mother, Margaret Van Tuyl or Metcalf, lived till the 28th of August last, when she died at the age of 89. In noticing her death, the "*Christian Intelligencer*" observed, "She died as sweetly and calmly as she had lived. All who knew her loved her; her face, on which there was scarcely a wrinkle noticeable, was the true expression of her sweet and cheerful life and character."

Dr. Mair visited Canada in 1843, having the year before received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of New York. He returned, however, to the State of New York, and for eighteen months supplied the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church at Brockport. He declined a call to Warsaw in the same State, but laboured there for a year. He again visited Canada in 1846 and 1847, when his services were sought by vacant congregations in Markham, Galt, Goderich and Fergus, all within the present Province of Ontario. He ultimately accepted a call to St. Andrew's Church in

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the last named place. It was on the 28th July, 1847, that this, his future abode and the scene of his last labours on earth, was first visited by Dr. Mair; and with regard to his ministry there I may perhaps be excused for entering rather more into detail than I have the ability to do with respect to any of his other charges.

When the division took place in the Presbyterian Body in Canada, in the summer of 1844, a portion of the Fergus Congregation, feeling constrained to retain their connection with the Church of Scotland, were left without a pastor. This was the congregation which Dr. Mair came to visit. During the three years which had passed, it had been kept together, and its temporal and spiritual interests cared for, chiefly through the persevering exertions of Mr. Alex. D. Fordyce, (of whom some notice will be found subsequently in note) and who was the only remaining member of the original Kirk Session, that is to say, remaining with this part of the original charge. It will be readily understood that the visit, even for a couple of weeks, of one so highly spoken of as an earnest and able preacher, would be highly gratifying to one burdened with a deep sense of the responsibility implied in the right discharge of such duties as had devolved on him of whom mention is now made, and the more so, when the hope was cherished that it might lead to a permanent relation. When Dr. Mair reached Fergus, however, this new friend had been lying on a sick bed for more than two weeks; the crisis of an alarming illness had been safely passed, but his will had been drawn out in preparation for the worst. and the future pastor's name attested the invalid's signature. The

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friendship thus commenced was a source of much enjoyment in the future, and the two very soon became co-workers in all that concerned the interests of the congregation, to their mutual and ever increasing comfort and satisfaction. In consequence of the division already alluded to, the Presbytery to which St. Andrew's congregation was attached, had been greatly weakened, and thus pulpit supply to the charge had been merely occasional and exceedingly limited. The Congregation, however, had been re-organized, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper dispensed in the spring of 1847; but a settled ministry was felt by every one to be pre-eminently desirable.

During his two weeks' sojourn on this occasion, Dr. Mair was able to form a tolerably correct idea of the field of labor, and, on leaving, he received a hearty invitation to return to take permanent charge of the flock. It was not long till he signified his acceptance of the invitation. He returned to the state of New York and made preparations for removal to Canada, and finally took up his abode at Fergus on the 16th October. He commenced his work at once, and was formally inducted to the charge on the 1st February following.

The congregation soon became sufficiently large to give full employment to an energetic workman, such as the new minister at once showed himself to be; and that without the additional work he had contemplated in the instruction of a few pupils in Greek and Hebrew. Shortly after coming to Canada, an advertisement in a provincial paper of 2nd November, 1847, had informed any "who might be disposed to put themselves under his care," that it

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"would be his object to make them thoroughly acquainted with all the works of 'Homer, Longinus on the Sublime,' and the simple, yet lofty Scriptures of the New Testament." I believe, however, the only one to whom he gave systematic instruction of the kind, during his residence in Fergus, was a young man whose home was there, and who now occupies an influential position in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Rev. W. T. McMullan of Woodstock.

In view of subsequent remarks felicitously expressed, and quite in keeping with my own recollection of Dr. Mair's preaching, it may be sufficient to observe here, that it was evangelical, earnest, and varied. Doctrinal passages were pretty largely dwelt on, but others were by no means overlooked. Prophecy received attention, and was a subject full of interest to his own mind. Religion was on all occasions clearly shown by Dr. Mair to be a personal matter, and to be nothing unless it were all in all. No uncertain sound was uttered by him.

He valued the Bible-class and the weekly prayer meeting very highly, making careful preparation, especially for the former, which was commenced on the 5th December, 1847, and carried on with few intervals ever after, all who came to it receiving a cordial welcome, even though not belonging to his own congregation, as was the case with not a few. The subjects taken up and investigated in the course of the seven years of his ministry, were the Epistle to the Romans, the book of Ecclesiastes, the 5th and 6th chapters of Matthew, and the 14th and 15th chapters of St. John's Gospel, with the Epistle to the Galatians, as far as the passage which was the

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subject of the last lesson on the 17th September, 1854: "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This was unconsciously a parting advice, but a better, surely, could not have been left with the class. The specified portions of Scripture mentioned above, were not, however, always taken up consecutively; there was not one of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, which at one time or other, was not dwelt on in the class; while anti-christian errors and pretensions were carefully examined and presented in what he felt to be their true light. Numerous portions of Scripture history were also interspersed through the course, especially towards its close; the passage from Galatians being always followed by a brief consideration of one or other of these.

The Rev. Mr. McMullan, of Woodstock, Ontario, to whom allusion has been made, writes me on the subject: "I can never forget Dr. Mair's Bible-class. He grappled with every deep and difficult point that came up in the lesson, without ever shewing the slightest disposition to pass by a difficulty; on the contrary, he seemed to have a fondness for deep subjects. He had the rare faculty of simplifying whatever was susceptible of being simplified, and those mysteries of the faith which are 'above reason though not contrary to it,' as he was wont to express it, he knew how to present in their sublime grandeur and majesty, as like God, and worthy of Him."

In connection with this it may be remarked, that as the latter years of Dr. Mair's theological course

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were passed under Dr. Dick, at Glasgow, a natural partiality to his former teacher's mode of presenting truth, and a predilection for the catechetical mode of instruction as more effective in impressing that truth on the memory and bringing it home to the heart, may have been what led to the preparation of a Theological Catechism based on Dr. Dick's lectures. This catechism it was his habit while in Fergus, and probably in similar circumstances elsewhere, to make use of when a doctrinal topic happened to form the subject of the Bible-class lesson. As a specimen of this catechism, one of the chapters, that on the "Final State of the Righteous," is given in this volume.

He took a lively interest in the Sabbath School, not engaging personally in the work as a teacher, but frequently encouraging those present by his presence. He had prepared a sermon on the Sabbath School cause in the year 1854, but its delivery was prevented through his death.

Missions to Heathen lands also interested him greatly, and towards the close of his ministry a monthly Missionary prayer meeting was established in the Congregation; recent intelligence from Mission fields being communicated.

The Session which, as has been seen, had but one member remaining when he came to Fergus, was enlarged on two occasions during his Pastorate there, and a Sessional Prayer meeting was held every month at the houses of the several members in rotation, when a short exposition or exhortation would be given; and he very often expressed the desire that all Christians could see their way to joining in a united prayer meeting whatever their special church connection might be.

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He estimated very highly the importance and value of the Bible Society, and on several occasions delivered addresses fitted to promote its interests, and other calls of a like nature were cheerfully met; and essays prepared and delivered on subjects of *general* interest, such as Education, Mental Independence, etc.

He very rarely administered Baptism otherwise than in presence of the whole Congregation; any departure from his ordinary practice being in cases of clear necessity. Very seldom, indeed, was it sought for in private when his own views of duty came to be known.

Conscientious as he was in attendance at Church Courts, he did not take a prominent part in the proceedings. He maintained the friendliest relations with brethren in the ministry, and was always ready to reciprocate in every good word and work.

He was generally cheerful, rejoicing with those who rejoiced, and weeping with those who wept. His work, in certain aspects, it is true, weighing on his mind, might cause depression, and he did not feel at liberty from considerations of Christian expediency to take part in some gatherings of a social nature, in which others in his position might have felt little scruple in mingling, but cheerfulness, I think, was the rule with him; the reverse, the exception.

He mourned over comparatively little evidence that the Word preached was to any great extent the means of a change of heart among his people; but while marked instances may in great measure have been denied him, encouragement was not altogether withheld. During the last summer of his life, a special

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illustration was brought to his view, of a decided change in this respect through his faithful exhibition of the Truth, and the Great Day will doubtless disclose other instances wisely hidden from him here, to gladden him hereafter.

He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear. Perhaps he was more specific in public prayer than is commonly the case, and more direct in personal intercourse with his people, respecting their highest interests, and yet he was not one who disregarded prudence in such matters. In a charge to a Brother in the Ministry, at his installation, about a year before his own death, we find he addresses him in these terms: "Walk in wisdom towards them that are without. It is a principle of our religion to render unto all their dues; 'tribute, to whom tribute; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor.' The courtesies and decencies of certain grades of social life, must not be infringed, but encouraged and exemplified. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, must be approved, cherished and illustrated. Shall I say that this rule has been violated? the truth requires it; for it cannot be denied that, under a mistaken notion of fidelity to the souls of men, the language and conduct of some have been equally at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, and the proprieties of life. These things ought not so to be. They are of serious injury to the cause of the Redeemer. Study always in your every day intercourse and communings with your people, to exemplify the deportment of the true gentleman, and of the devoted Christian Minister. Be

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like your great Master, who was a perfect model of civility, courtesy and kindness."

His personal exertions and means, were employed most freely, where cases of need came before him; and when these were insufficient in the circumstances he acted on the feeling that he could without impropriety call on such as had, to communicate to such as had not; regarding those whom God had blessed with abundance, in the light of His stewards for behoof of their poorer brethren. On this point, a Ministerial brother and friend, who accompanied him part of the way in the last journey he took on earth, and who has himself now entered the eternal world, wrote me very shortly after Dr. Mair's death in these terms: "With all his profound erudition, his strong intellect, his love for all that was grand or sublime in thought and imagination, and his pure and warm benevolence of soul, he was in spirit and action a true gentleman. His sensibilities were indeed, just too exquisitely tender for this rude world of ours; too much so for his own comfort; and nothing inflicted on him acuter anguish, than when he found that his own warm-hearted, gushing benevolence was met by indifference and coldness."

He had a high regard for punctuality in adhering to engagements; almost looking on such as carelessly transgressed in this respect, as "moral delinquents." His last journey affords an apt illustration of the inconvenience he would rather subject himself to than be even the innocent occasion of disappointment to others. He certainly did what *he* could. While he resided in Fergus, Dr. Mair in general enjoyed good health. Much of his professional visiting was done on foot, and this, consider-

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ing his habit of body, was probably in his favour, but he was occasionally liable to severe headaches, and to a milder and comparatively harmless form of the disease which brought his valuable life and labours to what humanly speaking might be looked on as a premature close, for he had not reached his 60th year at his death.

In the summer of 1854 he visited New York, and attended the missionary meetings there, undertaking to return in October to Johnstown, to take part in the Communion services. With this intention he left Fergus on the 2nd of October having on the immediately preceding day addressed his people from the words, "Awake thou that sleepest," and closing in the following solemn and striking manner: 'Is there not some one, on this enchanted ground, who is ready to listen to the heavenly call and awake? Awake, my brethren, and believers on earth will rejoice over your salvation; and Saints and Angels in heaven, will strike their harps to a bolder and nobler note of praise.' On the 10th he wrote to me from Northumberland: "My dear friend—Oh! how mysterious are God's dispensations. 'His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters, His footsteps are not known.' I left Fergus expecting to enjoy some innocent pleasure and healthy relaxation in my journey, but it is with deep regret, I am constrained to say, that for the last eight days, I have been laid up under the care of a Physician in a state of sheer prostration. The indisposition under which I labour is a huge, rancorous carbuncle boil, and if not treated with care and skill, may be attended with great danger. I have neither slept nor been exempted from deep

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agony for the last ten days. May this dispensation lead me to die every day, and to be ever looking out for the last great change. The Doctor says it may be four months before I am finally restored. I trust, however, that God will enable me to preach on Sabbath days and not altogether arrest me, but the writing of these lines has utterly exhausted me. If within the range of possibilities we shall be home next week."

On the 16th Mrs. Mair wrote of him: "We arrived at Johnstown six days ago. We had an idea the worst was over, but we were mistaken. He has been utterly prostrated since we came here. We are stopping at Dr. Maxwell's, skilful in his profession, and a warm friend. Everything is done that human skill or friendship can do. Of course it is impossible to say when he will be able to travel, but as soon as it is perfectly safe we shall leave Johnstown."

The following day Mrs. Mair again wrote: "His case is considered very dangerous. Dr. Maxwell has sent to Albany for Dr. McNaughton to consult with in reference to it; does not see anything immediately alarming, but it has not reached the crisis. I am happy to say the symptoms are more favourable to-day than yesterday. He has been in a state of high fever for several days; much less at present."

On the 27th his much-valued friend, the Rev. Dr. Sprague, saw him. Of this visit he speaks in the funeral sermon he preached at Johnstown, and which is subjoined.

On the 31st the Rev. J. P. Fisher, of Johnstown, wrote: "At the request of Mrs. Mair I have to communicate to you the painful intelligence that your

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Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Mair, is very seriously ill, and to all human appearance is rapidly sinking into the arms of death. His physician informs me this morning that there is not one rational hope of his recovery. Indeed, we do not expect that he will remain in the body a day longer. This morning I asked him if he had a realization of the preciousness of the 23rd Psalm, and repeated, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.' After a few moments, he said, 'He is my Shepherd—in a good sense—in a good sense.' Shortly after he added with emphasis, "He will never leave me; He will never, *never, never* forsake me."

In the same letter Mr. Fisher added on the 2nd Nov., "The Rev. Dr. Mair is no longer an inhabitant of earth. He departed this life at ten o'clock. His funeral will take place to-morrow at two o'clock p.m." And so, this good man, and able minister, and faithful friend, was called to his reward.

Both in Johnstown and Fergus the funeral services were exceedingly impressive. In Johnstown all that was transpiring during the illness of their former Pastor was known to his friends there. In Fergus, on the contrary, owing to distance and other unavoidable causes, his friends had been kept in a very painful state of suspense from the 19th of October, when they learned that the life of their good pastor was hanging on a very brittle thread, till the 4th of November, when they got word that all was over—his pains, his agonies, his work on earth and a blessed immortality entered on by his ransomed spirit.

The tribute Dr. Sprague paid to his friend's memory in the funeral sermon he preached at Johns-

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town on the 3rd of November was too faithful and touching to be withheld in connection with this sketch. The Sermon was based on the words "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." It had been prepared on exceedingly short notice.

On the 12th of November the Rev. Wm. Barrie, of Eramosa, who still survives, although now incapacitated for active work, addressed the mourning flock at Fergus very suitably from the passage contained in Revelations xiv. 13, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

The mortal remains of Dr Mair rest in the beautiful cemetery at Johnstown—a marble obelisk erected over them—telling simply but very correctly that he was "a noble-minded and true-hearted man, a humble, fervent Christian, and an able and faithful Minister of Jesus Christ," and in the vestibule of St. Andrew's Church, Fergus, a monumental slab testifies to his having "an enduring place in the affections of the flock to whom with fidelity he had ministered there, and to the veneration and regard in which he was held by them."

After coming to America, Dr. Mair had revisited his native land on three occasions—twice while he was residing in the State of New York in 1835 and 1840, and once after his removal to Canada, in the summer of 1849. On the last visit he had the gratification once more of seeing his parents in life, and enjoying pleasing intercourse with other friends. His father's death occurred only four months before his own.

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The particulars which follow, from the pens of the Rev. Dr. Sprague, Professor Lewis, and an anonymous friend, will supply, as far as can now be done, deficiencies in the foregoing narrative.

The "Montreal Presbyterian," shortly after the death of Dr. Mair, contained the following simple lines, evidently a heartfelt tribute to his memory and expressive, I fully believe, of the general feelings pervading the congregation in common with the writer when the news of his unexpected demise was received:—

"And shall we hear that voice no more
Nor see that sainted face?
Our mourning hearts on Sabbath sigh
To see his empty place—
But hark! a voice of comfort comes
From yonder shining throne
That says 'there is beyond the grave
A land where death's unknown,
And there, my servant doth abide
And sings Redeeming Love
And, as the stars, in lustre bright
Shines in that land above.'"

So far as I know none of Dr. Mair's sermons in the selection which was published in 1856 had been previously given to the public, nor, with the two exceptions noticed in the preface, any of those which are contained in this volume.

Four miscellaneous sermons had been published during his ministry at Johnstown, but on what subjects or occasions I have not learned. It is possible that the sermon on "Emotion on the part of the preacher," might have been prepared for a special occasion, and subsequently adapted for use among his own people, but this is mere conjecture.

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Dr. Mair's widow is still in life, having with her aged mother, lately deceased, resided for many years in Schuylersville, Saratoga Co., N. Y.

An aged sister of Dr. Mair's also survives, resident in their native village of Newmilns, Ayrshire.

I gratefully acknowledge obligations to all who have interested themselves, and afforded encouragement in the preparation of this volume.

A. D. F.

*Taylor Lewis, LL. D., Professor in Union College,
to Rev. W. B. Sprague, D.D.*

UNION COLLEGE, SCHENECTADY,
JANUARY, 31ST, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR,—My acquaintance with Dr. Mair commenced in the fall of 1828. He had then just come from Scotland, been received by the Dutch Church and sent as a Missionary to our poor congregation in Fort Miller. His preaching there, and in the adjoining Church of Northumberland, soon called out an interest and an attendance which provided him a good settlement, without the farther aid of missionary funds. After remaining two years he received a call to the Presbyterian Church in Johnstown, from which period you are well acquainted with his history. I must ever esteem Dr. Mair among my most valuable acquaintances and warmest personal friends. To him must I also ever attribute a most marked change in my own life and labours, so far as they have been of any value to myself or others. I had been practising law for several years

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in the retired village of Fort Miller, and the result was a dissatisfaction with the profession, with myself, and almost everything else. In fact, from various circumstances, I was in a state that might almost be called one of spiritual desolation. My books were few, my society very limited, my health not the best, and my profession growing continually more and more distasteful. But not to talk too much about myself, you may well suppose what relief came from the society and conversation of Dr. Mair, although he was not at that time a Doctor of Divinity. It was evident that there was something about this learned yet unpretending Scotchman, to please every condition of life in our homely neighbourhood. He preached with great acceptance. He was frequent and faithful in visitations and catechisings after the old Scottish mode. The power of his pulpit exercises, and the great beauty and simplicity of his instructions in his parochial visits, presented a contrast which charmed me greatly. He insisted upon my attending him in many of these catechisings, and the vivid remembrance of them would make me love the man if I had not had other causes for it, in the warm personal friendship, and the many acts of disinterested kindness, he ever afterwards manifested towards me. Along with all this, however, there was something which at first was not a little troublesome. Mr. Mair was a very excellent Greek and Hebrew scholar. His familiarity with Homer especially was remarkable, but no less so, his love of talking about him, and reading him aloud whenever he could find one who had interest enough in the matter to listen to him. In these recitations he

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would get into the same loud boisterous manner which you so well know as characterizing him in the pulpit. He was more than anything else like the conception I have formed of the old Homeric Rhapsodists or public chanters of the Iliad—so completely was he carried away by his enthusiasm. He was a Hebraist of the Parkhurst School, but much beyond the common standard of Hebrew learning which prevailed among the Scotch and English clergy; and although his acquaintance with the language was not of the Andover or German stamp, it was in some respects equally solid, and at the same time more spiritual. He was less skilled in phonetic and grammatical niceties, but saw much in Hebrew roots. In these he was ever discovering a depth of meaning often real, but sometimes perhaps only existing in his own rich, religious and deeply Biblical imagination. He was ever at that time urging me to study Hebrew with him, and this is what I meant in saying that he was somewhat troublesome; as I had then no thought of doing any such thing. He would sometimes almost provoke me by his importunities, and his continual reflection on my imperfect education, as it seemed to him, in being ignorant of so important and even sacred a branch of knowledge. Every man, he would say, who has any leisure, and any pretensions to liberal education, ought to be a Hebrew scholar. In short he worried me out. To get rid of his importunities more than for any other reason, I one day borrowed his grammar and learned the Hebrew alphabet. It was one of the turning points in my own life. The study of Hebrew soon became my one ardent pursuit by day and by night. Ennui fled away. The dis-

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agreeable things of the Law were forgotten. To make the story short, the whole after-current of my life was changed. I was introduced into a new world of thought. All my studies, feelings, aims, took a different direction, until the Law was relinquished for that profession of a Teacher, to which I have ever since been devoted.

You may well suppose that I have reason to remember Hugh Mair and his Hebrew Grammar. Our intercourse from that period was ever of the most intimate kind. Although I afterwards made some respectable progress in Hebrew, he ever, from old habit, assumed a sort of tutorship over me. He frequently visited me in New York, and on such occasions one of the indispensable exercises was the reading of some long portion of the Hebrew Bible, verse about, in which we would continue for hours—he taking the lead and assuming a tutorial style, giving his favourite root-meanings in Latin, and in a manner which to one who did not know him, would seem to savour of pedantry. Sometimes this would try my patience a little, especially when I had other demands upon my time, but now my heart reproaches me that the least degree of such a feeling should have ever been called out by anything however eccentric from so noble a friend. The remembrance of my intercourse with Dr. Mair is full of the most cherished associations. From personal knowledge I am convinced that his last dollar would have been freely shared with any friend who needed it. He was ever seeking out and trying to do good to his own countrymen, in this way; sometimes subjecting himself to repulsive treatment which he never would have borne on his own ac-

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count. Some men of a different school of Theology, and of a different religious type, would say that there was not enough of what they would call "decided active piety" in him. But there could not be a greater mistake. His Scotch hilarity sometimes, and fondness for anecdote, might strike some of this class unfavourably; but he was, for all that, a most devout, a most lowly-minded, spiritually minded, modest Christian. Dr. Mair had a habit which I have seldom seen in my personal intercourse with other clergymen. A short, social visit to a single friend, whether in the parlour or in the study, he would request to have closed with prayer. It was the conclusion of the freest and most lively interview. "Just a short spell of prayer before we go," he would say, and then one of the most touching appeals to the God of Mizpah, the God of friends and friendship, that I have ever heard. Genesis xxxi. 49 comes into my mind when I think of him, "And he called it Mizpah, for he said, 'the Lord watch' (yi-seph) between me and thee, when we are parted the one from the other." Especially do I think of it, since he has gone his last far-journey. Blessed be his memory. You may think my language too warm for a brief biographical notice, but the feeling is one I love to cherish, and cannot help regarding it as eminently due to its object.

With great respect,

Yours truly,

TAYLER LEWIS.

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*From Funeral Sermon, 3rd November, 1854, by Rev.
W. B. Sprague, D.D., of Albany.*

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.”—DANIEL xii. 3.

I have chosen this subject, my friends, advisedly, and from a full conviction of its perfect adaptedness to these funeral solemnities. The Minister who has just fallen in the midst of you, I hesitate not to say, was a man of mark. His character, for both intellect and piety, could scarcely fail to make itself felt in any community into which he was thrown, and now that he has finished his course, I cannot doubt, not only that he has entered into the joy of his Lord, but that he is exalted to a place among those who, in consequence of their superior wisdom, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. It was certainly a somewhat remarkable providence that brought him hither to die in the bosom of a church he had so long served. Though seven years had passed since he was here as your Pastor, he had always retained an affectionate regard for you as a people, and was always glad to testify his regard by any means in his power. Accordingly he made an engagement to your present Pastor, more than a year ago, to share with him the services of the Communion now just passed; and in accordance with his accustomed punctuality, the week previous to the Communion found him here amongst you. But it was discovered at once that he had come with impaired health, and not only so, but that a disease had begun to develop itself, which often proves an over-match for medical skill, and, while it continues,

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is little better than a living death. He seems, however, to have had no idea that he was seriously ill, and insisted almost to the last moment that he would bear his part in the services of the Communion Sabbath; but when the morning of that day actually came, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his inability to make any effort, and immediately sunk into a state of weakness and suffering from which he was destined never to rise. Your Communion service went on, but he staid in the hospitable dwelling of his faithful friend and physician (Dr. Maxwell) preparing himself, no doubt by grateful and devout meditation, for drinking new wine in the Kingdom of the Father. And now it went abroad through all your dwellings that his life was in imminent jeopardy, and that it was not improbable that he had come to make his grave in the midst of you. As each successive day seemed to diminish the probability of his recovery, your pastor, about the middle of last week, kindly informed me of his alarming illness, and I came hither immediately in the hope of seeing him. I did see him, and though, owing to his great weakness, the interview was brief, it will always have a place among my most cherished recollections. I found him as I could always wish to find a dying friend, resting with humble confidence on the grace and faithfulness of his Redeemer. I asked him if he had great bodily suffering, and he replied: "Greater than language can describe; greater than you can possibly conceive without the experience." I asked him if his mind was peaceful, and his answer was: "I have no particular anxiety; if God be for us who can be against us?" and then repeated that precious passage, gathering

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himself up into an attitude corresponding with its triumphant tone. Everything that he said showed the depth of his resignation, the strength of his faith, or the warmth of his kind affections. From the representations which have been made to me, I judge that what I saw and heard was only a fair specimen of all that passed upon his sick bed. His death, though terrible in some of its circumstances, was a fitting and glorious termination of a Christian minister's life, or perhaps I should rather say, an appropriate introduction to the life everlasting. You will all, I think, agree with me, when I say that Dr. Mair was in hardly any respect an ordinary man. One could not meet him in the most casual interview, without feeling that he was in contact with a mind of a peculiar mould; and one could not see him long without being satisfied that it was a mind of marked superiority; it was vigorous, comprehensive, logical. The imaginative faculty was strongly developed, and rendered him always at home amidst scenes of both natural and moral grandeur. His taste was less exact, than his imagination was fervid and sublime; and he never seemed to pay much respect to the rules of rhetoricians. He was, I think, in many respects eminently favoured in his moral constitution; though in estimating this part of his character, it is no easy matter to run the line between the gifts of nature and the effects of grace. Certainly he had one of the kindest hearts that ever beat in a human bosom. While he was condescending and charitable, and not disposed to make a man an offender for a word, he held to his own convictions with a martyr-like tenacity, and would have found it much easier to sacrifice his life than

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his conscience. He was as guileless and simple-hearted as a child; being conscious of no evil intentions himself, he was slow to suspect evil in others, the consequence of which was that sometimes an unworthy advantage was taken of him. He was uncommonly circumspect in his deportment; he kept his heart with all diligence, and set a watch at the door of his lips; and I can truly say that, in all my intercourse with him, I never heard him utter a frivolous or reproachful word. He paid the most delicate regard to the rights of others; and though far from being in any sense a man of the world, his instinctive notions of honour and propriety were manifest in all his social conduct. He was modest almost to a fault, and though his modesty never led him to decline any duty that fairly devolved upon him, it often kept him silent where he might have spoken to advantage. He had evidently great depth of Christian experience; he seemed to live under an habitual sense of the Divine presence, and of his dependence on the Divine bounty and grace, and I doubt not, that those who knew most of his devotional habits, would testify that he was eminently a man of prayer. I think I may say, after a somewhat extensive acquaintance among ministers of the Gospel, that I do not call to mind one, among either the living or the dead, who has given me more reason to say of him, that his conversation was in Heaven.

Dr. Mair's literary and theological attainments were of no ordinary character. His knowledge of the original languages of Scripture, particularly the Hebrew, was probably more thorough and exact than that of almost any clergyman of his day, not

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professionally devoted to these studies; and I doubt not, that many besides myself, who have had the privilege of being present at his family devotions, have been struck with the fact that he read from his Hebrew Bible, with nearly the same fluency as if the volume before him had been in his vernacular tongue. He was also a profound student of Theology, and was especially familiar with the eminent theological writers of his own country. He was accustomed to contemplate Christianity, not more in the benevolence than the grandeur of its provisions, and it was at this point that his intellect seemed to operate more vigorously and his imagination to glow more intensely than at almost any other. I must say a word concerning him as a preacher; and yet your own recollections will be far more faithful than any description I can give. His sermons were remarkable as impressive and powerful exhibitions of Evangelical truth. He evidently could not feel at home in the pulpit unless he had entrenched himself in the very heart of Christianity. His thoughts were always rich and appropriate, often striking and magnificent, and were presented in an exuberant and splendid diction; indeed, so entirely was the whole vocabulary of beauty and sublimity at his command, that he often drew upon it to excess, thus rendering the truth he presented less palpable, by a superabundance of dazzling imagery. His manner, as you know, was that of a Boanerges, evincing the highest possible interest in his subject, and an earnest desire that every word he uttered might take effect upon the hearts of his hearers. He had none of the graces of oratory; but there was a fervour, an impetuosity, a manifest

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self-forgetfulness, that scarcely left it at your option whether to give him your attention or not. I think those who have ever listened to the impassioned tones of Dr. Chalmers, and who remember how he sometimes worked himself up almost into the fury of a tempest, must have recognised considerable resemblance between his manner in the pulpit and that of our departed friend.

Of his character as a pastor, it would be unfitting that I, who have had so little opportunity to know concerning it, should speak to you who have had experience of it so long; but I am sure it was impossible that with his benevolence, his tenderness, his self-denial and his habitual sense of accountableness, he should not have manifested in private, as well as in public, a deep interest in those committed to his care. I can imagine that he may have been in some circles less free and cheerful than might have been desired, but I am confident that, wherever he was, he was always acting under a deep sense of Christian and ministerial obligations. The near relatives of our lamented friend are, I believe, with a single exception, on the other side of the ocean, and may God mercifully prepare them to receive with a submissive and trusting spirit, the tidings of his departure. But that one exception, need I say, is the companion of his life. It is perhaps well for her that, if such an affliction must come, it should have overtaken her here, on ground so familiar and dear to her, and among friends who will regard it a privilege to minister to her consolation; but there is a burden pressing upon her heart which human sympathy may indeed alleviate, but which the God of all grace and comfort alone can remove. To His special

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favour let us commend her in our fervent prayers, and, while she walks in the vale of sorrow, may she still walk in the light of His countenance.

Brethren in the Ministry, this affecting dispensation sends forth a note of solemn admonition to us. We are here to-day to take the last warning from our departed brother, ever to keep our loins girt and our lamps bright. He has left us an example of conscientiousness, of spirituality, of fidelity to our high obligations, which it well becomes us to consider and follow. He has taught us by his patience under the severest suffering, his spirit of quiet and tranquil trust in the approach of death, how a Christian, especially how a minister, ought to suffer and die. By the circumstances in which death met him, we are charged to be always ready to render up our account; for, it was while he was on a journey, and in expectation of fulfilling a sacred and cherished engagement, that he found the preparation going forward for his translation to brighter scenes. Brethren, let us be instructed, admonished, comforted, by what is here passing before us. Let us revere our office the more, for having been permitted to look at it in connection with the solemnities of death, and of "a great eternity." It is not long since this neighbourhood, this Presbytery, was afflicted by the removal of the venerable Yale; and now that his former friend and associate has also passed away, shall we not include them both in the affectionate remembrances of this hour, and find in each a helper in our own preparation for rendering up our account with joy?

Members of this Christian society, though I may not speak to you as a vacant congregation, I may

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surely speak to you as a mourning one; though you have a pastor in the midst of you, whom you love and honour, your hearts still tenderly recognize the relation that once existed between yourselves and the departed; and it comes irresistibly to you, that though the Presbytery dissolved the ecclesiastical tie, it did little to break the tie of affection that bound him to your hearts. And wherefore, let me reverently ask, is this strange dispensation? Why is it that he should have been permitted to leave his own immediate charge, and come to this scene of his former labours to lay off his armour and be crowned; and that, while he was making ready to administer to you the holy Communion, God was making ready to administer to him the baptism of death? I hear a voice from heaven rebuking the inquiry, and saying, "What I do, ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter." Nevertheless one purpose of infinite wisdom is obvious enough, it was a purpose of benevolence towards you. God designed thereby, to give him the opportunity of preaching to you from his coffin, though you were never more to hear the living voice. He designed that he should make his grave among you, so that there should be a standing monitor to speak to you of your accountableness in respect to his ministry. And now, while your sensibilities are so fully awakened by these funeral rites, and you would fain pay to his memory the best tribute that you can, believe me there is no other that is so fitting to you, or that would be so welcome to him, if his faculties were not locked up in an iron slumber, as a resolution, formed in the strength of Divine grace, that you will endeavour still to carry out the great purposes

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of his ministry among you. Recollect that, though you will hear his voice no more on earth, the record of all his teachings will be spread out before you in the judgment, and he will himself stand as a witness in respect to the manner in which you have treated them. I seem to hear him as he bends towards earth from the throne to which he has just been exalted, pleading with some of you whom his ministrations have never availed to subdue or even awaken, to cheer the heart of your present pastor, by opening your ears and your hearts to his message. He used to speak to you on the great evangelical themes in strains of awful majesty, and with a spirit evidently bowed under the weight of his own utterances; but how infinitely more impressive would be his presentations of God's truth if he could speak to you now, from his actual experience of invisible realities?

Oh, how he would magnify the great salvation! How his spirit and countenance would glow as he described eternal scenes! How he would enlarge upon the value of life as the only accepted time! How he would pour contempt upon all the little interests of the world, as brought into comparison with the grandeur and the glory, and the all absorbing interests of the life to come! God grant that your minds and hearts may be open to all that is monitory, and all that is comforting in the passing scene. May that new grave that is to appear in your cemetery to-day, and that will render this a day of mark in the calendar of your Society, perpetuate in your remembrance, not only the great and good man who will slumber there, but those living truths, those earnest appeals, by which he sought to make you wise unto salvation.

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But let us not forget while we bury the remains and embalm the memory of our venerable friend, that there will soon be another mourning assemblage convened in a neighbouring Province, to repeat so far as may consist with their circumstances, the solemnity which now occupies us. They will meet as a smitten family to spread their sorrows before our common Father in Heaven, and to ask for His all-sustaining grace. May that grace be given to make their burden light. In the remembrance of their departed Pastor's instructions and example, his fervid eloquence and exalted piety, may a channel of all-needed comfort and blessing be opened to them. They will have to reflect that they took their last earthly leave of him without knowing it, and with the reflection, God grant, that they may connect the solemn purpose, that by His grace they will endeavour so to live, that their next meeting with him shall be in Heaven.

L. E. M. in New York Observer, of 9th November, 1854.

Dr. Mair's death has already been announced in some of the papers as having occurred at Johnstown in this State, on Wednesday evening of last week. He had left his home in Fergus, Canada West, a few weeks before, to visit his friends in this State, and especially to pass a Sabbath with his former charge at Johnstown, and take part in the services of the Communion. On his arrival there, he found himself considerably indisposed, though for some days he had no idea of the dangerous nature of his mal-

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ady. It soon became apparent, however, that his life was in great jeopardy and the conviction was forced upon the minds of his friends that his disease would probably have a fatal issue. After suffering intensely about a fortnight, during which he was a model of submission to the Divine Will, death came to his release; and the friends to whom he had ministered many years, and whose attachment to him notwithstanding their recent separation, remained undiminished, bore him to his grave.

I knew Dr. Mair first, shortly after his settlement in Johnstown, and when he had been in this country not more than two or three years. I first saw him in Presbytery, and was struck with his modest, quiet, grave and eminently Scotch appearance. On being introduced to him, I found that the same qualities were still manifest, though other and more striking, were soon developed. And as he appeared to me then, so he appeared ever afterwards, except that his leading characteristics were always becoming more intense and impressive. If I were to speak of the qualities of his heart, as they came out in my intercourse with him, I should perhaps notice first, his great benevolence, taking on now the form of sympathy with human suffering, prompting to the most active efforts for its relief, and now the form of generosity and magnanimity, which makes one forgetful of injuries, and disposed to visit evil with good. I have known more than one instance in which the case of some impoverished Minister has come under his eye, and he has undertaken to meet it with a heroic firmness of purpose that refused to take a denial; and he has persevered in going around among the rich of his acquaintance and asking aid

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of them, until he has had the pleasure of seeing that his object was accomplished. There have been some cases in which he felt that the treatment which he received was neither just nor kind, but his manner was to let such things pass in silence, or if he adverted to them at all, it was never in a tone of crimination. But while he was so forward to labour for the benefit of others, he always appeared reluctant to accept favours himself, and when he did accept them, his gratitude seemed always greatly to exceed their value. I have never known a man of more genuine modesty than Dr. Mair. I have repeatedly seen him in a company of clergymen, where, in point of both intellect and acquirement, he was really the superior man, and yet, but for an occasional monosyllable, or your brief reply to some question that was put to him, you might have supposed him entirely dumb. In a very small circle especially with two or three intimate friends, he would be sufficiently communicative, but I think his freedom of conversation usually diminished in proportion as the circle enlarged. I have occasionally heard him preach, and always with high interest and edification. There was nothing in his personal appearance in the pulpit, to awaken high expectations, but he never proceeded far in his service before his audience felt that they were listening to no ordinary man. He spoke with a degree of fervour and passion that was sometimes almost painful. He who was so silent and diffident out of the pulpit was a very lion in it. His theme was always in the highest degree scriptural and evangelical; and it rarely, if ever, failed to impart an exciting influence to all his faculties. You felt that every word came

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from his inmost soul, and was uttered under an awful sense of the powers of the world to come.

As he was Scotch by birth and education, he was thoroughly so in his theology, and though he was never intolerant towards slight differences of opinion, he attached vast importance to right views of Christian doctrine, and he rarely preached a sermon in which some great evangelical truth was not distinctly exhibited. His sermons were characterised by great fulness and splendour of diction, and it may be doubted whether this was not often carried so far as to take somewhat from the effect they would otherwise have produced. They were always logically constructed, and though containing much striking and sometimes profound thought, I believe they always came within the range of ordinary intelligence, when joined to close attention. They were generally very long, too long perhaps to suit most American congregations. I remember once to have heard him preach more than an hour and a half before the Presbytery, but it was such a magnificent exhibition of the great truths of the Gospel and the manner was characterised by so much fervour and power, that I think nobody felt that the sermon was too long. I have heard one of his stated hearers, than whom there could be no more competent judge of preaching, say that he never heard a sermon from him that did not contain something new, and well worthy of being treasured up. But there was no more striking feature of Dr. Mair's character than his piety. If I ever knew a man who seemed to me habitually to walk with God, it was he. Not only was he eminently conscientious in respect to every part of duty, and faith-

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ful to his convictions (no matter how great the cross to be taken up), but he was distinguished for the spirit and habit of devotion; and he seemed to me, never to lose the sense of the Divine presence. His prayers in the family were always most pertinent and tender, and evidently rose from a heart which was the constant habitation of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Mair had a large store of knowledge, especially in connection with his own profession. I am acquainted with no clergyman in this country, who reads the original languages of Scripture, especially the Hebrew, with greater ease. He was familiar with many of the old Theological writers, whom he seemed to value not less for their unction, than their orthodoxy. It was my privilege to see this excellent man just before the hand of death was laid upon him. Being informed that he was dangerously ill, I was unwilling that he should die without my seeing him once more, and I accordingly went to Johnstown for the purpose. I found him unable to lift himself from his bed, and evidently dying under the sharpest agony. But he was perfectly composed, patient and willing to leave all with God. His heart was as full of kindness as ever, and his mind was wandering gloriously over that field of Christian triumph in the latter part of the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. There was apparently no rapture in his exercises, and yet there was a sublime confidence that cast out all fear and shewed that his spirit was ready for its final flight. I felt that it was a specimen of true Christian nobility that lay before me. I parted with him feeling confident that it was for the last time: and so it proved, for his funeral was one week

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from that very hour. I was present and witnessed the solemnity, and I felt myself to be in the midst of a mourning community.

His remains lie amidst those of his former parishioners, and probably his grave could not have been made where it would have been more frequently and reverently, and gratefully visited. He has left no family except a widow, whom many hearts have united in commending to the God of all comfort."

NOTE A.

WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.

Dr. Sprague was born in Andover, Conn., 16th October, 1795. He succeeded Dr. Lathrop as Pastor of the congregation of West Springfield, Mass., in 1820, and in 1829 was called to Albany, N. Y., as pastor of the Second Presbyterian Charge there. For the period of forty years he ministered to this congregation and then removed to Flushing, L. I., where he died on the 7th May, 1876, at the age of eighty-one.

His *Letters to a Daughter*, and *Lectures on Revivals* are well known. He published seven extended *Biographies* of eminent ministers, and contributed as much to the religious literature of the age as almost any man who could be named; but his great work was the *Annals of the American Pulpit*, in the preparation of which he was engaged for seventeen years. The New York "Observer" in noticing his death, remarked—"He was a cultivated, elegant,

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voluminous, useful and popular author; a justly celebrated preacher, an indefatigable and successful pastor; an unselfish and devoted friend; one of the most child-like, unsophisticated and cheerful of men. In the quiet shades at Flushing he passed the serene and beautiful evening of his useful and remarkable life. Here, with his books and manuscripts, and the portraits of illustrious friends, most of whom had preceded him to the Assembly, whose names are written in Heaven, he delighted to commune with the past, and to take by anticipation the coming future. Never a man of this world, having accepted the Christian religion, as a little child, he was meek, and simple, and gentle: the victim, sometimes of great misrepresentation, and wrong, yet never rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing, he lived above the world and kept himself literally unspotted from it. Old age, very old age, by reason of strength fourscore years came on him, and his majestic form was bent; and the strong men bowed themselves. But his soul was in the sunshine of Divine favour, and his faith beheld the day approaching. No sore disease, no fierce pains disturbed the placid dawn of his eternal life. But, "as one wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams," so did he "melt away into the light of heaven." With the utmost kindness, in the midst of manifold engagements, Dr. Sprague rendered valuable aid in the preparation of the first selection of Dr. Mair's Sermons for the press.

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NOTE B.

TAYLER LEWIS, LL.D.

Dr. Lewis was born in Northumberland, Saratoga County, N.Y., in 1802; graduated from Union College in 1820; studied law, but abandoned the profession for that of teaching, which was much more congenial. In 1838 he became Professor of Greek and Latin in the University of New York, and in 1849 of Greek in Union College, N.Y. Deafness rendering him unable to hear recitations, the chair of Greek was changed to that of Oriental Languages with which Biblical and Classical Literature was combined, and thenceforward carried on the class by Lecture. He died at his home in Schenectady N.Y., 11th May, 1877.

About six months before his death, a sketch of his life and labours was given by Professor Welch in the "Sunday School Times," for which Dr. Lewis had consented to prepare every week, critical notes on the Old Testament lessons of the International series; but his first notes had hardly been forwarded, when he was struck down with disease, and utterly incapacitated for writing. Still with the ready aid of his daughter, the work was carried on by dictation, as he lay on his bed in weakness and pain, and was never an hour behind the appointed time for delivery. As the six months series of lessons drew towards its close, his own strength gradually failed, and when his notes on the last lesson of the quarter were forwarded, he felt that it was his last work, and he was content.

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In connection with what he has himself said of his introduction to the study of Hebrew through Dr. Mair's means, and as illustrating his wonderful enthusiasm in his great life work, the following memorandum, dated 30th August, 1863, and inscribed on a blank leaf of his Hebrew Bible, will be found interesting:—

"This Bible was purchased in 1829. For a number of years it was read through twice a year, then, once a year, and since, repeatedly. Almost every difficult place has been made the subject of marginal or separate mnemonic annotation; every rare word noted, and every rare meaning preserved in marginal signs. It is much disfigured, but a much studied, and to me a very precious book."

In Professor Welch's sketch of Dr. Lewis, he had said "For a long time it has been his habit to make a yearly pilgrimage to his old home and haunts, on the beautiful banks of the Hudson, noting every change, and especially missing his favourite trees, while musing and resting beneath the shade of those which still hold memories as green as their summer leaves; an old man, now, whose ears are forever closed to the music of the flowing river, the singing birds, and the voices of loved ones—with long, gray locks, and keen, restless, dark eyes, that seem to peer far beyond the present, and with his shoulders held back by his cane under both arms. For thirteen years, this lover of learning, friend of humanity, and disciple of Christ, has dwelt in the lone silence of total deafness. How joyous at last, will it be for him to hear from the Divine Master, whom he has so long and so faithfully served 'Well done!'"

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NOTE C.

ALEX. DINGWALL FORDYCE.

This warm friend of the subject of these "Memo-
rials," had sustained repeated and severe trials
shortly before Dr. Mair came to Canada, and they
were not over then. In the year 1845 his eldest
son, a young man of high promise was cut off by
cholera, at Calcutta, after 24 hours' illness, just as he
was commencing business and entering on a career
of Christian usefulness. In 1846 the partner of his
life for 33 years was removed by a very distressing
illness to a better world. In 1847 business anxiety
pressed heavily on him, and illness came on which,
at Dr. Mair's arrival, had brought him apparen-ly
to the very brink of the grave. He had barely
recovered from this illness, when the vessel in which
his youngest son was crossing the Atlantic was
lost, with nearly all on board; and in this case,
the bright anticipations of a young and ardent
mind, looking forward to the work of the Minis-
try, suddenly terminated. It may readily be im-
agined that, considering all these trying bereave-
ments, the friendship and Christian sympathy of
Dr. Mair was peculiarly consolatory to the subject
of this notice. His life was prolonged till 23rd
February, 1852, when he died peacefully at the age
of 66, after an illness of six weeks' duration. How
very highly Dr. Mair's ministrations were valued
by him, may be judged from the following extract
from a letter to his family, during a short absence
from home, just six months before his own death.

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It is dated on Sabbath, 10th August, 1851. He says:—"I have no doubt you will be at this time hearing the conclusion of our worthy Pastor's sermon, full of faith and fervency of spirit; spoken from the heart to the heart, and leaving a lively impression of the things spoken, upon the mind. The sermon I have just heard was good, but there appeared to me a great want of spirit-stirring matter and manner, and too much delicacy in bringing the subject home to the conscience. Altogether it made me bless God for our privileges—let us make a good use of them while we have them."

On the 29th February, 1852, Dr. Mair preached his friend's funeral sermon from the words "The day of death is better than the day of one's birth," and thus sketched the character of the departed:—"He was gentle, amiable, dignifiedly simple, and truly benevolent. In his conduct he was uniformly correct, highly decorous, and truly honourable. His friendship was true, unfeigned, disinterested, unostentatious, heartfelt and firm. In his private character he combined an assemblage of excellencies, which never failed to dignify and adorn it, and which, all who knew him well, could not but esteem and admire. On the day of the Lord, in the Sanctuary, and in the enjoyment of its ordinances, he was very much at home; he seemed all attention and interest, ever catching the eye of the Herald of the Cross, hanging on his lips and apparently absorbed in his great subject. Though well stricken in years, he was invariably found at the weekly prayer meeting, however stormy or lowering the evening; ever willing and ready to address the Throne of Grace

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in behalf of the Church, and the world at large; and with a punctuality and a zeal equally laudable and exemplary did he attend on the recitations of the Sabbath evening Bible class. Would to God, that the unenlightened and unsanctified of this place would copy the beautiful example which he has left behind."

NOTE D.

MEMORABILIA OF MAIRS, OF ORWELL, &C.

The first of this family we have heard of is the Rev. George Mair, of Culross, and afterwards of Tulliallan, in Scotland, who was said by the famous Thos. Boston, of Ettrick, author of the "Fourfold State," to have been "one of the happy instruments of the breaking forth of a more clear discovery of the doctrines of the Gospel, in the Church of Scotland." He was ordained to the ministry in the year 1698, and died in 1716. He was father of the Rev. George Mair, of New Deer, in Aberdeenshire, and of the Rev. Thomas Mair, of Orwell, Kinross. The public life of Mr. Mair, of Orwell, was closely blended with that of Messrs. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, in the Secession which they were mainly instrumental in originating. He was born in 1700, and after forty years' ministry at Orwell, died, and was buried there in 1768. He was a man of great ability and worth of character. His nephew the Rev. William Mair, of Muckhart, son of the Rev. George Mair, of New Deer, also fell in with the Secession movement. He does not appear to have

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taken so prominent a part in the Ecclesiastical controversies, by which the times he lived in were noted, as did his uncle; but, for thirty-five years he laboured at Muckhart, where he died in 1780, at the age of fifty-six. He was the author of several sermons which were published during his life, and of a volume of lectures to which some verses are prefixed referring to his useful and unwearied ministry, to the refining influence on his spirit of a long continuance of severe affliction, and to his triumphant death.

Although there was in all probability no relationship existing between this family and the subject of these Memorials, they were of a kindred spirit with him, possessed gifts and graces which distinguished them in their day and generation, and were attached to the same branch of the Church, and it would almost seem as if certain characteristics of Dr. Hugh Mair might have been found in Thomas Mair the friend and fellow-labourer of the Erskines. From the Rev. William Mair, of Muckhart, having been nearly related to my grandfather, I was led in the summer of 1874 to visit his grave at Muckhart, and that of his uncle at Milnathort (Orwell) and readily found both, the former covered by a stone level with the ground, and recording as lying there not only Mr. Mair but a successor in the ministry who had been born the very year in which Mr. Mair died. The remains of Mr. Mair, of Orwell, rest under an Altar Tombstone bearing a somewhat quaint eulogy which informs the reader that—

“Elijah-like, for zeal on earth oppressed,
Removed from strife, he dwells serene in rest.
Twice twenty years he preached to numbers round,

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How glad were all who heard the joyful sound !
Orwell, with tears, your guide withdrawn, deplore,
Mourn for your loss, this Prophet mourns no more.
A soul-physician, skilled with hearts to deal,
Sores to rip up and bleeding wounds to heal,
Many have felt his doctrine drop as balm,
And blessed the man God sent their minds to calm.
I end my plaint ; *Mair* sings where praises flow,
Redeeming love, his darling theme below."

MEMORIALS OF THE
LATE HUGH MAIR, D.D.

I.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE NATURE OF THE LOVE OF
CHRIST.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above ;
Deeper than the depths beneath ;
Free and faithful, strong as death."

"And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."—
EPHES. iii. 19.

IN the universe of God we find many phenomena which are utterly and absolutely inexplicable, and for which we shall perhaps never be able satisfactorily to account in this imperfect state of being ; and, as it is in the universe of matter, so is it in the universe of mind. But, of all mysteries, God Himself is the greatest, and His dealings towards men as apostate creatures, in the gift, mission, sufferings, death and finished work of His Son in our nature, are perfect mysteries, and indicate a love that is at once fathomless and summitless, and of course inconceivable and indescribable. And, as it is in the case of the Father, so is it in the case of the Son in our nature, as the great Messiah. How astonishing that the Eternal Son, con-substantial and co-equal with the Father, should not merely have assumed humanity, but in that humanity have obeyed, and suffered, and bled, and died, and thus have accomplished for a creature, perhaps the lowest in the scale of intelligence, what a universe of pure worlds

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could never have achieved! Does not the love of Christ, then, thus entertained and cherished from eternity, and displayed to the view of all worlds in time, annihilate all conception, and immeasurably transcend all knowledge.

The love of Christ will now claim our attention. What is meant by the love of Christ? Here let it be observed that, as Christ is the Eternal Son of God, one with the Father and Spirit, there is a *general* benevolence which He displays towards everything created, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational; for, as He made all things for His own pleasure, so He has a Divine satisfaction in seeing them prospering and brightening around Him. Hence, says the Psalmist, contemplating God as the great Parent of the universe, and the fountain of all life: "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast, how excellent is Thy loving-kindness." Again, there is a *peculiar* benevolence which He displays to man, the noblest of His works below, in providing for him an accommodation suited to his rank in the scale of being, the expressions of which benevolence are still continued with him, in some measure, even in his fallen state, and amidst all his wanderings away from Him in the paths of iniquity, "For," says an Apostle, "God hath not left Himself without witness, in that He doeth good, and giveth us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons." And again, there is a still more *special* love, which Jesus, as the true God, bears to those of our race whom He has appointed to be the heirs of the great inheritance, which is unfading as immortality, everlasting as eternity, and boundless as the desires of their deathless souls. "Truly God

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is good to Israel"—that is, to His own peculiar people. And says God Himself, when addressing Himself to His chosen ones, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." In this verse His decree is represented as having been pregnant with love to His people, long before they had a being. He gave tokens of it in the day of their espousals to Himself, and His heart dwells upon them with peculiar complacency during all the after-stages of their being; for it is written most emphatically, "He will rest in His love." All these modifications of love, however, are common to Him with the Father and the Eternal Spirit. They are just the goodwill of the God of Providence and Grace in all the varied modes in which it operates among the works of His hands.

But the love which we are now contemplating is the *love of Christ*. Now, as the term *Christ* is the proper name of our Saviour, not in His original character as a Divine Person, but in His assumed character as the Anointed of God, or the Messiah, which in the language of the Hebrews means *anointed*; so, the love here ascribed to Him must be that which He bears to His people, not merely in the capacity of their God, but of their voluntary surety, their divinely constituted Head. It is not so much that mere good pleasure, which appears to us in choosing a peculiar people and decreeing their deliverance, but that operative good-will which positively tells upon the Church, in fully executing that decree, in actually erecting in our world (a planet stained with sin and darkness, with misery and desolation, and but a mere speck amidst the

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myriads of worlds that crowd the universe of God) —in erecting in such a world that goodly, lofty, and stupendous structure of mercy, the wonderful plan of which was hid in the bosom of the Almighty from all eternity. In one word, the love here spoken of is that tender, generous, and sublime moral sympathy which moved the Son of God to rise out of His place, in the greatness of His heart, to come in between the sinner and an angry God, and to stand and mediate between them till He had accomplished an honorable reconciliation. "Unto Him that loved us," saith John in the book of Revelation, "and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

Before condescending on the vastness of this love, let it be remarked, that while we thus venture to distinguish between the love of God to the Church as the Eternal Jehovah, and the love of Christ as Mediator, we are not to be understood as insinuating that there is any real difference in the principle of the two, and far less that there is any opposition between them. No; the good-will of God to the Church is substantially the same, under all the variety of aspects in which we can possibly view it. And between His purpose of love, and the execution of that purpose by the mediation of His Son, there ever has been, and there ever will be, the most perfect and sublime harmony. All the distinction, therefore, for which we dare plead here, is just in the manner of expressing His love; not in the nature of the thing itself, for this is immutably and eternally the same. We call that love which

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is displayed in choosing a certain portion of our race to salvation (a doctrine which, though stoutly impugned by many professed Christians throughout Christendom, is yet one of the great essential doctrines of the Christian system, and one great source of the Christian's consolation), we call that love *Electing* love; and why? just because we see it manifested in the revealed purpose of Election, and in nothing else. And in like manner, we call the love which is displayed in accomplishing this purpose *Redeeming* love, because it is in the work of redemption, and there alone, that it is made known to us. But in both of these we see nothing but the same Divine benevolence, exhibited to us under diverse aspects, or presented to our minds in different points of view. At the same time, every one knows that it is not the mere existence of love to him in the breast of another, but the expression, the manifestation of it to his heart, which chiefly attracts his notice, and draws out his affections towards the person in whom it resides. And accordingly, in unison with this universally received fact, every Christian knows that it is not the mere thought of love, as it exists in the secret purpose of God, but the effulgent, the astonishing, the unparalleled, the ever memorable and ever to be adored expression of that Almighty thought, in the doing and dying of the Great Redeemer, which most effectually touches his heart, and disposes him to contemplate it with delightful astonishment, and even while here to sing of its immeasurable greatness and inconceivable sublimity with a joy almost ecstatic, and in some degree assimilated to that rapture and transport which it excites and com-

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mands in the pure, bright, and glorious population of heaven. So that it is still in what is emphatically styled the love of Christ that we get by far the most ample, striking, and astonishing discovery of the good-will of God to perishing sinners. It is here, and here alone, that we see the mighty decree, as it were, bringing forth and unfolding to our view the unsearchable, exhaustless and immensely valuable treasures of Divine goodness. Here we get a sort of panoramic view of that goodness, spread out before us in glorious perspective, and rising to heights at once the most sublime, glorious and majestic—heights towering infinitely above angelic view, and destined never to be reached by the loftiest flights of finite or created intellects. And it is upon this, therefore—the vastness of this love—that we mean to fix our attention in the sequel.

And here let it be observed, in the *first* place, that the love of Christ passeth knowledge in respect of its *venerable antiquity*. There is a natural tendency in the human mind to value a friendship which has been of long standing, and there is a very peculiar pleasure to be derived from thinking of one who has been steady in his attachment to our person, and uniformly and invariably true to our interests amidst all the vicissitudes of a long and diversified life-time. We look on such a one with deep emotion; we invest him with a thousand attractions, and cherish the recollection of him, as of one who has been to us the very balm of life, sweetening the sorrows and enhancing the joys of our earthly pilgrimage. Thus do we confide in the friend whose benevolence we have already experienced, and fondly indulge the hope of future protection. We have no

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friend on earth, however,—no, not the father that begat us, nor the mother that gave us birth—who could look through the vista of an awful and distant futurity, and set his heart upon us, when as yet, we were not. Our friend among men, however fond and faithful, (and sometimes, blessed be God, we meet with one of this description, one, near and dear to us; one twisted closely to the very fibres of our hearts, and in some measure identified with our very souls), even he must see us existing, before he can love us; and how often, alas! does he learn to forget us, as soon as we disappear. And hence it is necessary that a correspondence or regular intercourse be kept up, in order to swell the tide of love in the bosoms of creatures, and to make it circulate freely and mutually, like so much electric fluid, from bosom to bosom; for without this, it is ever in danger of freezing into an utter apathy, or a cold and frigid insensibility. But, how delightful is it for the true Christian to reflect, that the love of Christ to him is gloriously superior to all the laws of human friendship, and stands out, in mysterious and eternal grandeur, and towers in lofty pre-eminence over every kind of love that can be named, whether in the world of angels or of men, or in any of the other worlds whose populations are holy and happy. It is true that He loves His people from the very beginning of their natural life; that He follows them with a look of heartfelt and exquisite compassion, while they are prosecuting the career of wickedness, and that he commences with them a kindly correspondence at the period of their conversion. All this is true, but it is not one-half of the truth: for He loved them before they had a being; He numbered

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their very bones when as yet there was none of them. On that bright morning, when this fair creation took its place among the works of God, though in magnitude vastly inferior to many of the other worlds that sprung from His Almighty hand, yet He emphatically rejoiced at the sight of it. But it was not the ponderous and colossal magnitude of its structure, nor the mighty heaving of its ocean, nor the new-born beauties of its scenery, nor yet the celestial vault adorned with all its shining hosts, that arrested his eye. He saw all these things and they pleased Him. "His word pronounced them good." But this material globe was chiefly interesting to Him, because it was to be the theatre of His future operations as a Prince and a Saviour to man; because, on its humble surface He was to achieve a victory over hell and destruction which would fill heaven and earth with astonishment; and because in the midst of its wayward population, He was to form a people for Himself, that they might show forth His glory; in one word, because He was to accomplish the greatest of all works, the work of human redemption, a work far more wonderful than the universe of God with all its numberless suns and systems of worlds; a work into which superior beings forever desire to look, and which will command the praise and wonder of an intelligent and virtuous creation to all eternity. But, let us listen to it, as issuing from His own lips: "When I (that is the Omnipotent Creator), "established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep; when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth;

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then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." In all this, however, it may be said there is nothing to be seen which absolutely passeth knowledge. We can form some conception of the Saviour's delight in the creation of a world that was soon to be peopled with the objects of his affection, and to afford Him an opportunity of showing His love to them by substantial deeds of beneficence. Yes, we can ; though even in this respect His love must appear to us altogether singular, and quite peculiar to itself. But can we carry ourselves back in imagination to those unbounded tracts of duration which lie far beyond the beginning of the creation of God ? Can we conceive of the time (if we can call it a time) when silence and solitude reigned over the universal emptiness of space, when there was no heaven and no earth, and when, consequently, nothing really existed but the invisible God and His unopened purposes, as yet shrouded in the mysteries of eternity's darkness ? In short, can we rise above our ideas of matter and its motions, of time and its successions, and form an adequate conception of eternity ? If we cannot, then neither can we comprehend the awful, the venerable antiquity of the love of Christ ; for, says He, " I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you." Christians, blessed of the Lord, afflicted, poor, destitute and friendless, though you may apparently be, in the midst of a poor, worthless, calculating world, yet, as Christian pilgrims, destined for the celestial country, exercise faith in

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the revelation of your Heavenly Father's care, and your Saviour's love ; and as ye thus believe, rejoice for the consolation, for you cannot name a point in duration, however remote, at which your persons and interests were not near to His heart. When you had no existence but among the unnumbered purposes which stored His infinite and eternal mind, He singled you out and marked you for His own ; when you knew it not, He fixed the period of your birth, chose out for you the lot of your inheritance, and looked upon you with unutterable delight. And if it pleased Him to love you, to cherish in His bosom the very image of you from eternity, is it possible that he can forget you in time ? "A woman may forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ; yea, she may forget ;" "but," says Christ, "I will not forget thee." "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands ; thy walls are continually before Me." Nay, He even identifies His own people with Himself : "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye," the most exquisitely delicate part of an individual's self. His love is invariable as His very nature, and everlasting as the ages of eternity. What then ought to be the estimate formed of such a love ? Is it not immense, and altogether inconceivable, and does it not pass all knowledge ? Though our minds were vastly more enlightened and enlarged, and had all the grasp of the mightiest intellectual giant, the knowledge of this love would still be utterly inaccessible, and stretch infinitely beyond the ken of man, or of angel, or of any other mightier finite intelligence, (if mightier there be), and thus be lost in the unfathomable depths of

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eternity. May not this love of Christ, then, be emphatically said to pass all knowledge, and even annihilate all conception?

Secondly.—This love is transcendent in respect of its *exalted nature*. All the knowledge which we have of love is derived from personal experience of its motions and effects upon ourselves. We feel it stirring within us, engaging our affections, and drawing out our hearts by a most agreeable constraint towards the object by which it is produced. But we are human creatures, possessed of passions which are easily excited and capable of being thrown into violent agitations, either of love or hatred, according to the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed. And so completely, from the very constitution of our nature, are we under the influence of these passions, that it is not possible for us to form any idea of love without their assistance. But, in the Divine mind there are no emotions, no passions, no fermentations either of good or evil, like those which fluctuate in the bosoms of feeble mortals. He is a pure Spirit, absolutely perfect in Himself, and infinitely exalted above the influence of any kind of excitement, of which we have any experience. When we speak of the love of Christ, then, who is a Divine person, we speak of a thing of which, considered in itself we have absolutely no experience; and about the properties and operations of which, as it exists in His mind, we know nothing at all, except that it is as highly exalted above anything that bears the name of love in our hearts, as the mighty God of heaven, that sits upon the throne of the universe, and regulates and controls the affairs of all worlds, transcends the feeble and the

puny children of dust. We can say, indeed, that it is strong, and operative, and lasting in its nature; and that it is holy, benign and generous in its influence, because we know that these must be its attributes if it be the love of God, for God is infinitely perfect, and consequently His love, which in very deed is just His moral self, or an assemblage of all His moral attributes under a particular modification, and directed to particular objects, must, like Himself, be infinitely perfect.

And, farther, we can say that since Christ was God in our nature, it might operate in His holy human soul, in a manner of which we may be able to form some kind of conception. But, when we turn our thoughts from these things, which are the mere substrata upon which the mind rests, and endeavour to fix them upon the great original Divine principle, we find it immeasurably above and beyond our reach. It has a height and a depth, a length and a breadth, which bid defiance to the computing powers of all created intelligences. It exceeds description, beggars language, annihilates conception, and is absolutely beyond the grasp of all finite beings. Well may we adopt, in reference to it, the emphatic language of the Psalmist. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it!" It is a love worthy of the Great God, and admirably calculated to produce happiness in man here, and to secure its enjoyment to eternity, hereafter.

Thirdly.—The love of Christ is inconceivably great *in the mode in which it has been manifested.*

It is usual among men, as is well known to all, to measure the degree of an attachment by the cost-

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liness of the sacrifice which the person possessed of it is disposed to make, in behalf of its object. If a man's love to any object be strong, it will dispose him to submit to the greater privations for the sake of this object; and, if it be weak and languid, the benefit resulting from it, will be proportionably small and unimportant. We may take the two following Scripture examples, illustrative of this fact. Jacob served Laban seven long years for his younger daughter, and they seemed to him but a few days, on account of the great love wherewith he loved her. And so strong was the love of Jonathan to David, that he could cheerfully relinquish the throne of Israel for his sake. He deemed no sacrifice too dear, no effort too great, which he could possibly make in his behalf. Nay, to demonstrate the strength of the passion in the bosoms of mere creatures, hunger and thirst have been cheerfully endured, perilous deserts and oceans have been crossed, and bloody deeds of chivalrous renown have been fearlessly performed, for the sake of a beloved object, while all seemed light and easy because it was felt to be the labour of love. All this, however, is conceivable by us. We can get a hold of it and make it somewhat intellectually palpable, because we see it to be human, and altogether within the reach of finite comprehension. And, if our minds are at all susceptible of tender emotions, we can enter into the feelings and the views of the person, who has been thus actuated, and can form to ourselves a pretty just estimate of the ardour and energy of the principle that inspired and fired his whole soul. Now let us try the love of Christ by this standard, and we shall find that here also, it passeth

knowledge. And, if it be asked, what has He done to evince His love to the mighty multitude of His ransomed ones? We answer—What has He not done, that God, in our nature could possibly accomplish? “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty, might be rich.” We know that though His claim was good to the adoration of a universe, He cheerfully submitted to all the obloquy of a Nazarene; that He became a “worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people,”—that, like a felon under the lash of justice,” He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,”—while His face was reddened with shame, and foul with spitting, although He was innocent and harmless as a dove; in short, that, while the foxes were hiding themselves in the holes of the earth, and the birds of the air were nestling in safety amid the thickets of the forest, the Son of Man had not where to lay His head. And what brought Him here? Why did He bow the heavens and come down? Wherefore did He lay aside His splendid and majestic robes, and take upon Him the garb of a feeble and dependent humanity? He had a Father and a throne in heaven where the insolence of men could never annoy Him; He had a crown and a sceptre, of which nothing created could deprive Him; and He had millions of the Heavenly Host, whose highest ambition it was to do Him homage. Yes, verily, He had all this. But in addition to it all, He had a heart smitten with sympathy, and heaving with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. He saw from His throne of thrones in

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this distant province of His mighty universe, a population called human, sold under sin, and rapidly hastening towards a dark, dismal, and eternal perdition; and His bowels were moved for them. And so strong, so tender, so generous, so mighty was His love, that through its inspiration, He was willing to encounter for their sake, all the opposition which hell and earth could muster. So that, although this were all that He did, to demonstrate His love, it would even here, surpass our knowledge. For, as the finest feelings of our nature are blunted and benumbed by the hardening influence of sin, there is none of us that can tell how painful and paralysing a thing it is, for an innocent mind to have its benevolent purposes thwarted, and its holy sensibilities stung to the core by the malignity of sinners. But, till we can tell this, till we can number the sighs, and the tears, and the bitter regrets which the cruel unkindness, even of His own people, wrung from the heart of the Man of Sorrows, we cannot measure the mighty amount of His love. This, however, is not all. He encountered death to demonstrate His love, and such a death as was never endured by any but Himself. He was arrested by a dark, mysterious, cold-blooded, money-calculating, avarice-stricken, and hell-inspired and hell-impelled traitor, called Judas; and hurried to a trial in solemn mockery of everything righteous. He was doomed to death by an extorted sentence, which he, who pronounced it, knew to be unrighteous; and He was hung upon a cross between two culprits, as if He himself had been the vilest of the three, and unworthy either of heaven or earth. While He was thus suffering the slow, the painful, the shameful, and the cursed death

of a malefactor, He looked for one to pity Him, He looked for a comforter, but He found none. The Roman soldiers with adamantine souls, rudely insulted Him, and the children of Judah laughed Him to scorn. How much more powerful than men are the legions of hell, or how much more skilful than men in tormenting the innocent, we know not. But of one thing we are certain, that upon this most eventful occasion, their energies were all exerted to fill His soul with unutterable woe. For this was the very hour and power of darkness; then all hell was agitated, roused to fury, and called into action; then millions of infernal spirits beset the Saviour and His cross, to overwhelm His spirit, and, if possible, to mar and defeat the whole of His undertaking. And if hell ever proclaimed anything like a vacancy, it was at that awfully interesting and ever-memorable period in the history of the universe of God. And to all this the great Messiah submitted, like a lamb to the slaughter. Nor do we hear a single word of complaint that escaped His lips, till His Father's heavy hand was lifted up, and inflicted on His yielding soul the final stroke of avenging justice, when He cried out in all the bitterness of anguish, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" He cried out under the pressure of suffering, for He was alive to its every pang. But He did not change His mind, nor shrink from the terrible conflict, but travelled through the whole in the greatness of His strength, and yielded up His soul at last by a deliberate act of choice. Now, what was it that moved Him to endure all this? Why did he consent to be baptized with so bloody a baptism? or how could He set his heart to the

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combat with so formidable and fell an adversary ? Did the justice of God require it ? The justice of God required no such thing, except in His vicarious capacity. It had claims upon the whole family of man, which, but for Him, would have sunk them to the pit of a dark and terrible and endless perdition. But it had none upon Him. Its sentence, or at least the sentence of the law, which is but a transcript of the justice of God, is "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But His soul never sinned, for He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; He had no sin and could have none, except what was charged upon Him, or to speak in the language of moral arithmetic, reckoned to His account, as the substitute of a mighty multitude of human sinners. Why then did He become such a spectacle of woe ? And here, upon the slightest reflection, the weakest Christian would whisper to himself,—It was because He loved me that He gave Himself for me ! Yes ! He loved you, and gave Himself for you ; and this is the solution of the great theological problem, the solution of the whole matter. The law got hold of Him, just because His heart took hold of us ; and, had He not loved us with a love, that like Himself, is higher than heaven, and deeper than hell, a love at once fathomless and summitless, His sufferings and death would never have been heard of. When the king of terrors, armed with the curse of the law, assailed Him on the dark and mysterious mount of Calvary, when He maintained a conflict with this frightful foe, till the earth that supported Him was shaken to its centre, till the rocks were rent, the graves laid

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open, the visible heavens clothed with mourning, and the sun enveloped in darkness, hell the lowest convulsed and horrified, and heaven the highest transported and enraptured, it was attachment to His own people that was the cause of it all. And when at last His heart gave way and sank within Him, He made His very soul an offering for us

“He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to a throne,
There’s not a gift His hand bestows,
But cost His heart a groan.”

“Herein verily is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” But in this we cannot but see that His love is a deep and impenetrable mystery. It is just as far beyond our comprehension as the agonies of His death are beyond our capacity of endurance. For, as there is no suffering which can once be compared with what He endured for the sake of His people, so every other proof of love which the world has ever witnessed, sinks into insignificance, and dwindles away into a sort of nothingness before that bright and glorious, and sublime display of it, which is exhibited to the wondering universe upon the cross of Christ.

Fourthly.—The love of Christ passeth knowledge in respect of its *objects*. Love in the heart of man is produced by the contemplation of excellence; and we must see in a person some real or apparent excellence of one kind or another before it be possible to love that person. This may be regarded as a universal principle, applicable to every instance of love that occurs among the children of men. Accordingly, if you ask an individual who loves

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another whom he calls his friend, why it is that he does so, he will tell you promptly that it is because he has discovered in him a certain number of qualities which recommend him to his esteem and confidence. And if you are able to convince him that the supposed friend actually possesses none of the properties he ascribed to him, he will love him no longer. He may feel some slight hankerings of mind after his company for a time, arising from a mere habit of having been on terms of intimacy with him; but so soon as he is made to see that his friend possesses none of those excellencies which he supposed him to have, everything that can properly be called love to him is extinguished at once, and he probably begins to be ashamed that he was so unwise as to bestow his heart on so unworthy an object. Such is the law of love as it operates in the hearts of men; and it is always according to this law that we are accustomed to judge of it. But if we proceed in this way to estimate the love of Christ, we find ourselves again involved in a mystery that is as really inexplicable by us as any of the former. For who were the objects upon whom He bestowed His heart? They were the children of the dust, it is true; and had they been no more than this we could have accounted for His love to them, for children of the dust are His creatures, and reason herself can inform us that it is dignified, that it is God-like in the Great Creator, to have respect to the works of His hands. But they were sinful dust and ashes, perishing under the curse of a righteous law. And what had they to recommend them to His love? They had nothing but hearts that were debased by every vile and loathsome affection;

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they were children of wrath even as others, and justly the objects of abhorrence to every virtuous and holy intelligence; creatures so insignificant in themselves, and so abominable in their sins, that, though by an act of Omnipotence they had been annihilated in a moment, or shut up in the place of retribution—the dark and tremendous abode of hell, the prison of the universe—to an endless despair, the happiness and joy of the Son of God would have suffered no abatement. Such were the objects upon whom He set His love. And that He could delight in such objects, after they were purified by His grace, is no mystery whatever; for then they were made comely, by virtue of His comeliness being put upon them. And if He is pleased with the works of His material world, much more may we expect Him to look with complacency on that which cost Him so much in the world of grace. But that He should choose to love them when they had no comeliness, when their very hearts were unmingled enmity against Him, and when they were every day provoking His indignation by their unrighteous deeds, is something passing all created knowledge. We may think of it—we may speak of it—we may wonder at it—we may adore it—and the excellent ones of the earth have done so in all their generations. And what is adoration? Is it not that state of mind in which a man feels himself lost and overwhelmed in contemplating the incomprehensible magnitude of an object of religious worship? So that the very first truth in religion—the grand primary principle that there is a God—must necessarily be an incomprehensible principle. A man may admire a system of religious doctrines

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which is level to his capacity; he may discover in it much beauty and excellence; but he must rise to an object which infinitely outmeasures his powers and fills him with amazement before he can begin to adore. He must see himself encompassed with truths which are to him impenetrably mysterious, and yet indisputably certain, before he can be sure that there is a Supreme Spirit above (the only absolutely unmixed Spirit), who has a claim upon the homage of his heart. And hence it comes out as a universal truth, that in a system of belief where there is no mystery there can be no God, and therefore no real religion. Christianity, then, is a rational system; not as some calling themselves Christians would teach, because all its doctrines are obvious to reason, but because many of them are mysterious and infinitely above reason. And if this were not the case it would be unreasonable, nay, it would be absurd, to regard it as Divine. Accordingly, the very Pagan who cutteth down an ash-tree in the forest, burneth part thereof in the fire, and maketh the residue an abomination, cannot be prevailed with to bow the knee before it, till in height of delusion he has in imagination invested it with all the mysterious attributes of a God. If, then, it be true that there must be in the religion of the Bible a certain portion of mystery, in order to convince us that it is really from heaven, what right has a creature, who is but of yesterday and knows nothing, to say how much or how little that exceeds our comprehension such a religion ought to contain? It is God, all-wise and majestic, who is speaking; let us keep silence before Him, and listen with the profoundest humility and deference to the words of

His mouth. But, after all, it still remains what it was from the beginning, one of the deep things of God with which a sinful creature is not allowed to intermeddle. Let us be persuaded, then, to approach the awfully interesting and sublime mysteries of the Gospel, and especially the one now before us, with all that humility and prostration of soul which become those who know so extremely little of the character, plans, and government of the Great Eternal. God forbid that we should ever attempt (like proud German Neologists) to bring the Bible to the level of reason, or to sist it at reason's tribunal, and to believe it no further than we can comprehend it. Rather let us come to the Bible with all the humility and docility of little children, and believe, admire, and adore what we may and will in the lapse of ages more enlargedly see, but shall never be able fully to understand. Occupying this humble and suitable moral ground in relation to the lofty mysteries of the Gospel, we will bow to its dictates, believe in its doctrines, repose unlimited confidence in its promises, rejoice in the Saviour whom it propounds, and count all things but loss for the sublime and peerless excellency of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and which, though clearly seen in the light of the Gospel, will yet be seen more splendidly in heaven, where the Lamb and His love will be its very light and joy, and honor, and glory. Oh! what views spread before the redeemed of God, in the vast, the boundless, the immense field of eternity!—views of moral wonders that shall be ever unfolding and ever brightening, and consequently ever exciting more interest and inspiring more joy. How magnificent

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their hopes ! How exalted, unfading, and imperishable their future and everlasting enjoyments !—all flowing through Christ and all conferred by Him. Does not the love of Christ, then, pass all knowledge in respect of its objects ?

Finally.—It passeth knowledge in respect of its results. Love is unquestionably the spring of happiness among all the intelligent and social beings that people the universe. And, if we search into our own hearts, we will find that we are all happy or miserable, just in proportion to the degree of pure and practical benevolence, or of selfishness and envy, which are operating within us. If we wish to become perfectly happy, we must just have our souls set on fire of love to our God and our fellow-men. And if we wish to be the means of scattering the elements of a pure and lofty and lasting happiness around us, we must just make the tide of operative good-will to undulate freely and copiously in the circles where we move. We may have all the wealth of a world at our disposal ; we may have all the authority and dominion which a crown and a sceptre can confer ; and have all the powers of intellect which ever distinguished a Shakespeare and a Scott in the world of romance, and the philosophy of human nature ; a Milton and a Pollock in the regions of poetry ; a Locke, a Stewart, and a Brown in the philosophy of mind ; and an Edwards, a Dwight, and a Chalmers in the more elevated department of a sublime theology ; in short, we may have all the giant attainments of the greatest of men ; but, if we have not within us a well-spring of kindly, generous and lofty evangelical feeling, we must turn out a curse to ourselves and to all who are within the

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spheres of our withering, desolating, ruining, damning influence. And cold and narrow, and calculating and selfish, as our fallen race undeniably are, hateful and hating, though they confessedly be, it is delightful to reflect that there have been always a few distinguished and noble seraph-like and heaven-born spirits, among an apostate population, who have understood this heavenly principle and acted upon it, and who, of course, have left with the world some splendid and beautiful pictures of its blessed effects, and some magnificent trophies of its mighty conquests. Yes, verily, we have had philanthropists amongst us, and we shall have them again, whose souls have been absorbed in the work of benevolence, who have drawn around them the aged and the infirm, the widowed and the orphan: who have poured into the soul the oil of consolation, and almost made the very victims of calamity to sing for joy. Now, all this may please us; it may surprise us, because it is rare; and we may even wonder and be astonished at the pre-eminent goodness of heart which it displays. The most celebrated achievements of this kind, however, are but deeds of human beneficence, and they are perfectly level to our capacities in their principle as well as in their operations and results. But when we speak of the blessed results of the love of Christ, the very use of the expression opens up to us a field of contemplation so vast and so varied, so sweeping and boundless, that we find it difficult to know where to begin when thinking of it, or how to feel when speaking of it, for here the subject swells out upon our view with a magnitude and a glory, and an expansive grandeur, which are more than sufficient to over-

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whelm the strongest, loftiest, and most gigantic created intelligences. Jesus Christ is all goodness, all benevolence, to the children of men ; and if we consider how He came to exist as the Christ, we will find that He is the very offspring of love. Let us only consider how much pure and tranquil delight has been infused into the hearts of saints, from the beginning till now, in their worshipping assemblies, in their domestic circles, and in their devout every-day communings with their God in secret. Let us consider how much pardon and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost have been imparted to the children of men since the trumpet of the Gospel was first sounded in their ears ; how many triumphs of faith and holy fervour have been exhibited to view, amidst the decays of nature, the severities of disease, the temptations of Satan, the corruptions of the heart, and the struggles and the agonies of their dying moments. And let us consider again what a scene of unmingled felicity shall be realized by the Church, when mighty multitudes of every kindred, and clime, and people, and tongue, shall become righteous, shall know the Lord, from the least of them even to the greatest ; acknowledge and feel the majesty of His character, submit to His authority, and be devoted to His cause—a cause, the purest, the loftiest, the best, whose progress is marked, and striking, and glorious, and whose triumphs will finally be, at once, untailing and immortal. And when we have considered the whole, let us recollect that all this amount of past, present, and future felicity springs directly from the love of Christ ; for there is not a Christian that breathes, who ever enjoyed a solitary gleam of genuine con-

solation, but from this source. Like the sun in the heavens, the centre of the planetary system, which sheds warmth, light, and cheerfulness over the face of the material world, the love of Christ, the great moral sun in the centre of the moral universe, is the great central source of the life and vigor and home-felt delight, which dwell in the bosoms of the people of God. And as this love is obviously the sort of moral *vinculum* that binds together an angelic and regenerated human population, and for aught we know, will unite them not only to angels but finally to all the pure and virtuous populations that may occupy the vast moral territories of Jehovah; we may reasonably suppose that all these populations do, and will, and must, perhaps from the very constitution of the moral universe, forever feel the benign, cheering, gladdening, and transporting influence of that love of Messiah, which in our dark world shone forth with such unutterable lustre, and threw an unparalled radiance over the whole character and empire of the Most High. And could this great, miraculous luminary be shorn of his rays, or could they be turned away from their favored objects, all that is loving and comely in the moral world would stiffen and expire. But in describing the love of Christ in two points of view, we must not confine ourselves to the Church and earth: for all that is known of it here in comparison with the state of the blessed, is but as the twilight of the morning to the radiance of noon. For it is this same principle which pervades, animates, and gladdens the mighty multitude of the faithful in the heaven of heavens. So that, unless we have tasted the pleasures of the paradise of God, unless

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we have listened to the melody and learned to count the notes of the lofty song of God's redeemed, unless we can tell what it is for countless myriads of human spirits to be sustained in one continued eternal transport of delight, after years have ceased to be numbered, and ages forgotten to revolve, our eye cannot see, our ear cannot hear, nor can it enter into our hearts to conceive of the blessed effects which shall never cease to flow from this love to all who shall dwell eternally around the throne of God and of the Lamb.

II.

CHRIST AN ALMIGHTY CONQUEROR AND GRACIOUS DELIVERER.

"But who is He that is the King
Of glory? Who is this?
The Lord of Hosts, and none but He
The King of glory is."—Ps. xxiv.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this, that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength; I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."—Isaiah lxiii. 1.

AMONG the Jews, it was common to celebrate the victories they obtained over their enemies in songs composed for the occasion. These pieces of poetry, which often contained a minute history of the transactions which they celebrated, were repeated by bands divided into regular order, who sung alternately. One band proposed questions, and the other made replies. These exercises were frequently accompanied with music of different kinds, and dancing;—and at certain intervals, the whole army bore a part in the service. In this manner we find the victory obtained at the Red Sea was celebrated: Exod. xv. 4-20. Moses, at the head of the tribes, celebrated in song the praises of the Lord, and repeated in minute detail the course of that interesting event. In the twentieth verse we are informed that Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with

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dances. And Miriam answered them, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." You will find examples of the same kind in the history of David, when he returned from the field of battle with his victorious troops; and in the Psalms which were then composed. In the sublime passage of which our text is a part, the prophet Isaiah adopted this method to describe the victory of the promised Messiah. He introduces the Church of the living God, contemplating the Redeemer returning from the field of battle, and putting questions to the Conqueror himself, to which He condescends to give a gracious answer. With a design to celebrate the victory which the promised Messiah should obtain in the latter days, the prophet avails himself of imagery derived from objects familiar to the Jewish church, for whose instruction he wrote. The quarrel which once prevailed between Esau, the founder of the kingdom of Edom, and Jacob, the progenitor of the Jewish nation, was maintained by their descendants. Upon the return of the Israelites from the house of bondage, the king of Edom would not permit them to march through his territories. Although brought into subjection under the reign of David, made tributaries to the Jews, and embracing their religion, the Edomites still maintained their former enmity. With the enemies of the Jewish nation they never failed to unite themselves. They assisted Nebuchadnezzar in his wars against Judea; and were the chief instigators of the cruelties which the Romans inflicted at the destruction of Jerusalem. Their enmity was invincible; but, from the connection of

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their history with the history of the Jewish nation, we are informed, that Edom as a nation, was completely destroyed, and its name blotted from the map of nations. The prophet then represents the descent of the Messiah into the territories of His enemies, and the enemies of His people, by an invasion of the kingdom of Edom, the determined enemy of the Jews; and the completeness of the Messiah's victory over these enemies, by the total overthrow of the kingdom. The Church, accordingly, is represented as contemplating the Conqueror returning from Edom, and in the language of admiration and astonishment, putting the question: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this, that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?" to which the Conqueror himself replies: "I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." That the person here addressed, and who gives the answer, is the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be denied. The Jewish writers allow that the Messiah is the person addressed. The language, indeed, is so elevated and sublime that it can apply to no creature, however exalted; and the apostle John renders its application to the Redeemer certain, by using the prophet's imagery in his description of the Redeemer in Rev. xix., 13: "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood—and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress

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of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'" With respect, then, to the person there can be no doubt. The event, however, to which the prophecy refers, it is more difficult to state. From the structure of the prophecy, and from the description given of Christ by the apostle in the revelation, it would appear that it has at least a secondary respect to the overthrow of the enemies of the Church by the Redeemer, before the introduction of the glory of the latter-day. We see in the writings of the ancient Israelitish seers the first and simple and unencumbered draught of a likeness, which has since been completed to its finest and most delicate shadings, by the evangelists and apostles; and in it may be distinctly and vividly perceived whatever is most characteristic and essential. The Prophet Isaiah has often traced in lines of fire the portraiture of One whose transcendent and peerless glory was afterwards to be displayed on the Mount of Transfiguration, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and on the great throne of judgment. There is sometimes compressed into a single passage that which is subsequently expanded into an evangelical history; and the effect of such condensation is, amazing pointedness, and energy, and strength. An example and illustration of the view which has been expressed is furnished by the passage under consideration. No one can fail to recognize in its beautiful and highly poetic representation the great personage who is the burden of the Holy Spirit's revelations, and the leading and kindling theme both of prophets and apostles. It may not be un-

profitable to contemplate for a while those particulars in His history, and those features of His character, which are here so distinctly alluded to. The text consists of two parts, which shall be considered in succession. The first of these describes, in the form of a question, the external appearance of One who had attracted the attention and excited the curiosity of some spectator; the second is a statement made by the person himself who is referred to, comprehending a brief announcement of His office and designs. The former refers only to those outward and visible points which could at once be perceived by an observer; the latter embraces more secret and hidden characteristics, which could be known only through express revelation. 1. The question which may be supposed to be put by the Church, or by the prophet himself as a spectator, is expressed in these graphic words: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?—this, that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?" The first particular here which requires to be noticed, is that the Person here referred to is described as coming from Edom and Bozrah. Edom was the name of the country which belonged to the descendants of Esau, and Bozrah was its capital. The circumstance that the Jews and Edomites had a common ancestry—being equally sprung from the patriarch Isaac, had no effect in uniting them to each other in a friendly alliance. Instead of regarding each other with mutual and lasting good-will, they cherished a reciprocal jealousy and hatred. To represent any one, therefore, as coming from Edom and Bozrah, was to convey the impression

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that he had been for a time in the territory and capital of an enemy. The particular position, then, in which Christ is here presented to our contemplation, is that of one who has been sojourning in a foreign and hostile country, and is returning homeward after having accomplished His object. The period of His history to which our attention is thus directed, is that which occurred immediately subsequent to His death and resurrection. It was then, that, leaving the scenes of His humiliation He was on His way back to the glorious mansion from whence He had come. It was there, that having proved Himself strong in battle, He was to be greeted by the angelic choir with the exulting and triumphant exclamation, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in." When he descended from the heavens, He in the strictest sense came amongst those who were His determined foes. The creatures with whom He took up His temporary abode, were violent in their hatred of His person and character, and claims, and doctrine, and government, and laws. Their expression of hostile feeling could not possibly be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Instigated by the god of this world, they sought to destroy His life when He was only an infant of days. They poured upon Him an overwhelming torrent of scorn and ridicule and sarcasm. They accused Him before the constituted authorities of His native country of sedition and blasphemy. They extorted by importunate clamour a sentence of death from His partial and pusillanimous judge. They deemed Him less worthy of release than one who bore the brand of a malefactor, and was charged

with the crime of murder. They procured His public execution with every attendant circumstance of infamy. Nothing which the most inventive ingenuity could contrive, or the darkest malignity could adopt, was left unemployed, in order to render more excruciating His bodily anguish, or His mental agony. Surely, then, when He issued from the tomb, and was returning to the presence and bosom of His father, He might well be represented as coming from Edom and Bozrah, from the country and the very capital of His implacable foes. He had suddenly appeared amongst His apostate and rebellious creatures; they had caused their vengeance to descend upon Him with dreadful severity, and now He had left them with the guilt of His blood upon them and their children.

The second particular which requires to be noticed in the question, is the appearance of Christ while returning from the country of His enemies. His garments are "dyed;" He is "glorious in His apparel," and "He travels in the greatness of His strength." The blood-stained raiment which Christ is here represented as wearing, plainly indicates the nature of the work in which He has been employed. It shews that He has been engaged in a deadly conflict—that He has experienced the determined opposition of those whose territory He had entered, and whose capital He had assailed. Christ did not spoil principalities and powers without a severe and protracted struggle. The combined forces and concentrated power of earth and hell were brought into the field, and had to be fairly encountered and vanquished. It was only when the fruitful resources of the prince of this world were completely spent

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that defeat was acknowledged and submitted to. But when, after the contest, Christ appeared in garments rolled in blood, it was not, as with other conquerors, in that of His enemies. His victory was gained in a manner altogether peculiar and unprecedented. He vanquished by suffering and apparent submission, and triumphed by sinking into the arms of death. His success consisted in exhausting the curse of the law which had been denounced against His people; and the means adopted by Satan to afflict and overwhelm His soul, were only forwarding His expiatory work to its final consummation. When He was harassed by temptations of unparalleled number and strength—when He was overwhelmed by the endless griefs and sorrows which sprung from every view of human character, and every experience of human conduct—when His prostrations, and prayers, and bloody sweat in the garden bore witness to the unutterable intensity of His mental anguish—when, in the judgment hall, the taunts, and reproaches, and refined mockery to which He was subjected, caused His heart to bleed—when He was suspended upon the cross, as an object against which every scoffer might direct his bitter ridicule and his ribald jests, and by which the withering lightning of heaven's anger might be attracted—and when He descended into the grave, apparently the hopeless victim of death, and the common prey of corruption,—He was only advancing by successive and rapid stages to the glorious triumph which He was destined to achieve. Every stroke which Satan aimed at His person and kingdom rebounded tremendously upon himself; and the exclamation, "It is finished," with which He

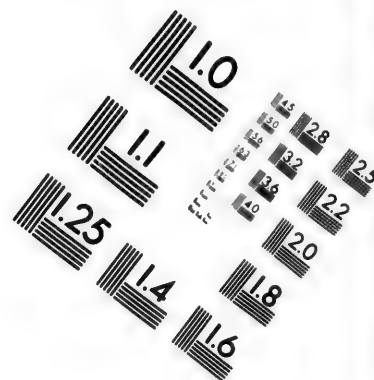
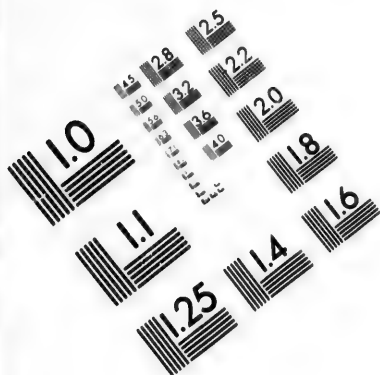
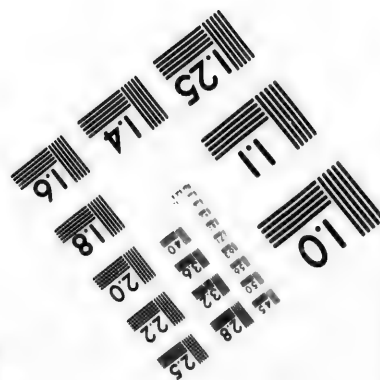
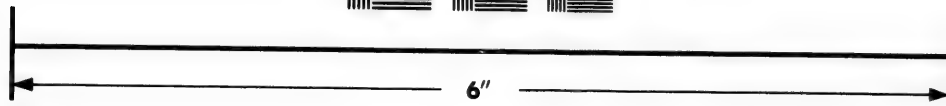
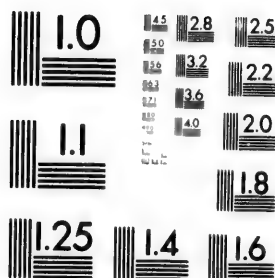


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gave up the Ghost, was the shout of victory. By the nearness with which His arch-adversary pressed Him to the verge of the grave, was His own approximation to overthrow and defeat really measured. It was thus, in the purple stream of His own blood, that His royal garments, as the King and Head of His Church, were dipped and dyed. It was by a fearful process that His robes acquired that peculiar hue which is characteristic of imperial power and dominion. The very colour of His regal apparel is a proof of the reality and the sufficiency of the atonement He has made. And now that He appears amid the glorious hosts of heaven, and has on His head many crowns, He is still visibly "the Lamb which was slain," and is "clothed in a vesture dipped in blood." But while the prophet continues to gaze upon the Person who has fixed his attention and prompted his inquiries, he notices another remarkable and characteristic circumstance: He "is glorious in His apparel." As the former expression alludes to the atonement He had made, so this clearly points to the personal excellencies and the imputable righteousness of which He is possessed. The numerous and distinguished graces which He exhibited, are here spoken of as woven into a garment of singular beauty and splendour. The figure thus introduced is appropriate and expressive. His excellencies had their seat in His heart, in the form of strong and rooted principle; but they also unfolded themselves, and shone with surpassing lustre, in His walk and conversation. The seamless garment which He wore had woven into it all the virtues which can ennoble our nature. These gave to it its warp and its woof, and decided its peculiar

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hue and colouring. Its pattern, of Divine contrivance, combined and blended in exquisite harmony and agreement all the graces of the Spirit. The design was so complete as that no conceivable excellence was left out; and its parts were so adjusted that they mutually enhanced each other's attractiveness. It had all the variety which an extended catalogue of moral virtues could furnish, and, at the same time, all the unity and consistency of absolute and unimpeachable perfection. Into the thread and texture of the vesture of Christ there were woven a dignity, the effect of which no intimacy of intercourse could remove, and a humility which made the lowest feel that it was possible to descend farther still; a holiness which could not look upon sin, and a compassion which impelled and drew to the abode of sinners; a justice which flashed forth in the most terrible denunciations, and a mercy which pressed a pardon upon the most enormously guilty; a courage and firmness which no combination of dangers could move, and a gentleness and meekness which commanded the confidence of the most timid and shrinking; a zeal for God which felt complacency in His equitable judgments, and a love of man which caused tears to be shed over a devoted city on which these were about to descend. If ever the apparel of Christ could appear transcendently glorious, it was while returning from the territory of His enemies. It was then that it was seen to be radiant with beauty. It was then that His graces and virtues had passed through an ordeal the most searching and severe that can possibly be imagined. It was then that His obedience had been tried, and was seen to rise superior to every

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kind and amount of temptation, and to be altogether independent of outward circumstances. It was then that the virtues which rendered Him fairer than the sons of men appeared to be not only surpassingly beautiful, but of so firm a texture, and so woven into His moral nature, as to be incapable of being either tarnished or uprooted. God the Father had frowned upon Him in His terrible displeasure, and had caused all the arrows of His quiver to enter into His veins ; but the ardour of that love which bound Him to the eternal throne continued in undiminished intensity. Human guilt filled the cup of trembling which He was condemned to drink, and human lips poured forth those expressions of scorn and hatred which lacerated His tender spirit, and human hands perpetrated those cruel acts of violence which prostrated His body in death ; but still the human family continued to awaken in Him the keen sympathy which a heart so delicately strung was capable of feeling, and His last audible prayer for His murderers presented a spectacle of the truest moral sublimity. The prince of darkness, into whose dominions He had penetrated, had employed all his arts of dissimulation, and all his concentrated force, to beguile or drive Him from the rugged path of duty ; but the warring elements have more effect in scattering the everlasting hills than had the restless efforts of Satan in originating an unholy feeling in His bosom. Every unfavorable influence was made to bear upon Him—every hostile agency was called into requisition—every instrument and mode of attack was successively and vigorously employed ; but He passed through the ordeal with unscathed excellencies. No duty

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was shrunk from, and no temptation was yielded to, and no grace was sacrificed, and no blemish was contracted. The white and glistening robes in which He appeared on the mount of transfiguration were not more free from any foul and contaminating stain than were His garments of righteousness after His work of obedience had closed. Arrayed in every moral and spiritual excellence which could beautify and exalt, He might well, in reference to His personal character, be said to be "glorious in His apparel." But, to complete the description contained in the question of the prophet, it is added that "He travels in the greatness of His strength." The circumstance that Christ is here represented as travelling seems to shew that He has accomplished the end of His mission in Edom and Bozrah—that He is leaving the scenes of His protracted obedience and unparalleled sufferings—that He is hastening to His Father's bosom, and His mediatorial throne, and His covenanted kingdom—and that He is most active in conveying and bringing to sinners the inestimable blessings of which He has paid the mighty price. He is on His way from abasement to glory—from humiliation to exaltation—from the cross to the crown—from the tomb of Joseph to the universal dominion. Having obtained the desired "gifts for men," He hastens to bestow them in royal munificence and profusion. But Christ has not the step and gait of an ordinary traveller. His every posture and movement is expressive of resistless might. Power is the attribute of His person which instantly and forcibly strikes an intelligent and attentive spectator. One of the distinguishing features by which He is singled out and described

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is, that He travels in the greatness of His strength. The omnipotence which is thus so essential and striking an element in His character, is not a mere natural attribute which belongs to Him as a Divine person—is not the almightiness which created and preserves the universe. It is a power obtained in a particular manner, and directed to the accomplishment of a special end. It is a might which has been procured by obedience and suffering, and which is expended in saving the guilty and depraved. It is a strength which has been gathered by performing, and which is exercised in applying, the work of human redemption. Christ had from everlasting, as God, an ability to create; but now He had acquired, as Mediator, a power to save. The strength, in the greatness of which He travelled, was the fruit of all He had done and suffered while in Edom and Bozrah; and it is now to be exerted in pardoning the guilty, in sanctifying the polluted, in breaking the fetters of the prisoner, and in raising the vile outcast to glory everlasting. This peculiar strength gradually waxed to omnipotence as He approached the termination and completion of His vicarious work. In opposition to ordinary rules, it steadily increased and augmented as His human energies were exhausted and crushed. It grew amid hardships, and pains, and griefs, and sufferings; and it sprung into undying vigour, and rose to infinitude, when at length He sunk in all the powerlessness of death. The means which were eagerly employed in wounding His spirit, and which were at length successful in suspending Him upon the cross, as the very personification of impotency and helplessness, were only nerving that arm which

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was to crush principalities and powers—to destroy, resistlessly, the works of the devil, and to snatch the perishing from eternal woes, from everlasting death. While the tide of His blood was rapidly ebbing, there was a rise in the tide of that strength through which He was destined to achieve His spiritual triumphs; and, even while lying in the silent tomb, He put forth an omnipotence through which He burst the bonds of death, and rose to be the Prince of life and of the living. It is in the perfection of a strength, which has thus been reached through weakness and death, that Christ is here represented as travelling. He has gathered it in the land of His enemies, and He is hastening to employ it in the accomplishment of human redemption.

2. Such is the description which is founded upon the general appearance of Christ, while returning from His state of humiliation. To the question in which this description is contained, Christ Himself replies, “I that speak in righteousness—mighty to save.” This statement forms the second part of the text, and shall now be very briefly considered. As explanatory of who and what He is, the first circumstance mentioned in the reply of Christ is, that He “speaks in righteousness.” It is thus one of His characteristics, and a fact by which He is distinguished, that He “speaks.” He is at once the personal and the audible “Word” of Jehovah. “Hear ye Him,” said the Father at His baptism in the Jordan, and on the mount of transfiguration. As descriptive of Christ, it is said by the Spirit, “Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice. She standeth in the top of high places, by

the way, in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors: Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." When Christ, as the Word of God, thus audibly speaks, when He addresses men by His Spirit, and thro' His commissioned ambassadors, it is to proclaim a righteousness, which He has wrought out by the merits of His obedience and death. Righteousness is the blessing which is needed by the guilty, in order to their admission into the presence and favour of God: and it is righteousness, therefore, which, while He travelleth in His strength, He lifts up his voice, with more than angelic eloquence, to proclaim. But, in this part of His answer Christ refers, not so much to the import or substance of what He says, as to the moral character of His declaration. His statement is not that He speaks of righteousness, but that He speaks *in* righteousness. He points not to any offer which He makes, but to His sincerity and integrity, and His rightful power and authority to make it. The circumstance that, while Christ speaks of righteousness, He at the same time speaks *in* righteousness, is essentially necessary to give value and importance to His offers of salvation, and to render His declarations and promises a sure foundation of confidence. That which enables Christ to speak *in* righteousness, while He offers pardon to the guilty and heaven to the condemned and lost, is the work of atonement which He has performed, and the spotless obedience which He has rendered. The offer of pardon, founded upon His work of expiation, is in entire consistency with the most perfect equity. While justice frowns darkly and terribly on sin itself, it

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smiles benignly on the sinner, to whom the righteousness of Christ has been imputed. The believer can point to the unchanging equity of the Divine character and government, as the immovable and unyielding foundation of his everlasting blessedness. It would have been expected that, speaking in righteousness, would have been tantamount to speaking in judgment, when man was the party addressed; but the satisfaction which has been made on the cross of Calvary, has rendered the voice of eternal inflexible justice, even when sounding in the ears of this world's population, capable of giving utterance to the words and the accents of tenderest mercy. How blessed and cheering is the thought that even Christ, the very personification of love and melting sympathy, the procurer and the offerer of a free and full salvation—that even He speaks in righteousness. This is one of the chiefest glories of the Gospel scheme—this is the point where the resources of infinite wisdom stand out in peculiar and boldest relief. They make justice the very herald of mercy to employ the unfaltering voice of stern, unbending equity in proclaiming the richness of the Divine compassion, and the freeness of the Divine forgiveness, to enable Christ to speak of righteousness, and yet to speak in righteousness—this was worthy of the councils of the Godhead! The still, small voice in which the Redeemer announces the glad tidings of salvation, is as strictly the utterance of one who can not and shall not “clear the guilty,” as the irreversible sentence, which fixes deep in the soul of the condemned, the pang of hopeless despair. That Christ speaks in righteousness, may appear to the superficial thinker

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a matter of course ; but it was in order that he might do so, that he sojourned in the country and capital of his enemies, and dipped His vesture in His own heart's blood.

The second and remaining part of the answer to the question, "Who is this?" is, that the person referred to is one "mighty to save." He has already been described by the admiring prophet as "traveling in the greatness of His strength;" and He Himself here announces the end to which His power is to be applied. Christ is mighty to save. Had He not been so, He would have been inadequate to the accomplishment of the work of salvation. But there are no barriers between the guiltiest of men and the glories of the heavenly world, however formidable they may be, which He is incapable of rending. His very appearance, as described in the text, is proof positive of this inestimable truth. His dyed garments proclaim that His shed blood cleanseth from all sin : and His glorious apparel is the announcement that the Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake, that He hath magnified the law and made it honorable. How full and satisfying is Christ's own declaration in the passage ! It proclaims one of those elementary and radical truths of the Gospel, of which the evidences lie in ample profusion and convincing clearness on every hand. When we accept the angelic invitation, and go and see where the Lord lay, we infer from the empty sepulchre that He is mighty to save. When, by faith, we enter into the holiest of all and there witness the High Priest of our profession, with His own blood as His plea, interceding with one who ever heareth Him, and saying "I will that they also

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whom Thou hast given me be with Me," we are instructed in the truth that He is mighty to save. When we look to the centre and throne of His mediatorial kingdom; when we consider the sceptre which He wields, the many crowns which He wears, and the vast empire which He governs; when we hear Him saying, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death," we are induced to exclaim that He is mighty to save. When we contemplate the myriads who have already washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; when we reflect on their glorious habitation and lofty honors, and rich and varied enjoyments, in connection with their original state and character and doom; when we try to estimate their numbers, and then remember that omnipotence was necessary to the exaltation of each individual, do we not in effect hear them addressing us, and declaring that He is mighty to save? The short and comprehensive announcement which is thus made by Christ in the text, is corroborated by an universal testimony. The declaration, "I am mighty to save," is echoed back from every part of God's creation. This, indeed, is not the answer which might have been expected from one whose treatment had been such as He had experienced. It might have been supposed that the violence, which had dyed His garments with His blood, would also have filled His heart with vengeance, and that His Almightyness would now be exerted in the infliction of fearful judgments. But the Spirit which He breathes is the same which suggested the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they

do," and which dictated the gracious words, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Believers, while you contemplate Christ as He is here presented to your view, does He not become more precious in your estimation? Have you not a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before you in the Gospel? But ere I close let me address myself briefly to the impenitent and the godless. You have been hearing--you have often heard--of the peerless excellency of the great Redeemer. Some of you, perhaps, delight to hear of Him as mighty to save. You are pleased to be told that somehow, through Him, you may escape from the wrath and curse of God due to you for sin. The preaching of the atonement is to you as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." Such have been the feelings of one generation of the godless after another, as they in succession occupied the seats which you now fill in the house of prayer. They came to the house of God, Sabbath after Sabbath, that they might listen to such statements as have now been addressed to you; but the ground of their satisfaction in hearing that the door of mercy was still wide open, was not that they might now enter in and thus be saved, but that they might continue to linger a little longer beside its portals, indulging their love of sin. You take pleasure in hearing of Christ and Him crucified. You would be dissatisfied with any address from this place from which such a theme was entirely excluded; but remember that it is in perfect keeping with human nature, to cry "Hosanna to the Son of David" on the one day, and to crucify Him

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on the next. O! how melancholy, how tragical that, while preaching from such a delightful theme as this, a cold and a barren orthodoxy enables the bitter enemies of Christ to assent to every statement that is made, and to continue listless and unimpressed as before. Oh, that the Spirit of God would enable the multitudes who have a form of sound words, but who have no real apprehension of the Divine beauty of Christ, and have never received Him, to understand their perilous state! Oh, that our words were as barbed arrows, in the consciences of those who are at ease in Zion, and whom Satan is leading to hell, round by the very gate of heaven! If the songs of Zion, if the voice of the messenger who publisheth peace, can only lull to repose, the Tempter is willing that the church be frequented and the Gospel be heard. If the impression that the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem are yet open, will render the sinner willing to tarry somewhat longer amid the pleasures and pursuits of the world, the arch-fiend himself will deepen it by demonstrating the fact. If a pertinacious adherence to an evangelical belief, and a form and a profession of religion, will, in any case soothe and satisfy—these will not in any degree thwart or defeat the purposes of Apollyon the destroyer. It is the crafty device of the Prince of Darkness to change the very medicine of Christianity into poison, and to convert the instrument of life into a weapon of death. Let us not minister to the false and delusive peace of any soul, as we must soon be called to give a solemn account. Let not the grand and delightful topic of our contemplations this day be used as an opiate for any conscience. Remember that He who is

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mighty to save goes on to declare : "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in My fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment." But let me press upon you the sincere and instantaneous acceptance of the salvation of Christ. Be satisfied no longer with hearing of His preciousness, but put it to the severe test of actual trial and experiment. Be not contented with merely assenting to or commending the Gospel, but truly, honestly, and cordially receive it. But if there is a solitary soul now present distressed or overwhelmed by a sense of his guilt, to such do we desire to minister with all possible tenderness. We would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Behold the dyed garments of Christ ; He has died as a sacrifice for sin. Behold his glorious apparel ; He has wrought out an everlasting righteousness. Behold He travel- leth in the greatness of his strength ; He comes, bringing salvation. Listen, for while He speaks of pardon, and grace, and glory for the guilty and lost, He speaks in righteousness. Commit your souls to Him for time and eternity, for He is mighty to save. Amen, and Amen.

III.

PERSONAL NATURE OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

" His hand is my perpetual guard,
He guides me with His eye ;
Why should I then forget the Lord,
Who is forever nigh ! "

" For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord."—LUKE ii. 11.

THE descendants of the royal house of David had, like the rest of their countrymen, assembled in their own respective towns, for the purpose of submitting to the census or enrolment which had been enjoined by the Roman emperor. The lineage of the royal house of Israel, as well as the humblest tribes of Israel, behoved to submit to the mandates of their heathen masters ; and the little town of Bethlehem was crowded with a vast number of strangers, who, viewing it as their paternal city, directed their course thither, in obedience to the command of Augustus, and entered their names as the subjects of the Roman empire. The grinding tyranny of the Herods, and the rapacious extortion of mercenary strangers, had, at this period, greatly depressed the welfare of the Jewish people ; and, partly from the evils of misgovernment, partly from disaffection on the part of the Jews themselves, it so happened that the condition of the nation was greatly straitened. There was unusual peace ; but, so far as concerned the Jews, it was the peace of sullen, and impotent, and unwilling submission. They hated Cæsar while they obeyed him ; for they imputed to Roman thralldom all their misery and degradation. We may well

suppose, then, that there would be many poor and humble descendants of David, besides Joseph and Mary, who came up to Bethlehem for the sake of the imperial enrolment; but, of all the sojourners in that city, *who*, to the eye of human observation, would have appeared so helpless, so unfortunate, so *miserable*, as those two strangers from Nazareth, who, after the weary and toilsome journey from such a distant part of the Galilees, were unable to find in all Bethlehem one hospitable, one accessible threshold? But so the providence of heaven ordained, that He who was to be named Emmanuel should in abject lowliness commence *His earthly* career. A rude stable was His birth-place; the *Desire of Nations* was cradled among the beasts of the stall; and although the prophet had of old time said, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son," this city would not look at the fulfilment of the prophecy, it would not observe the accomplishment of the miracle. Yet heaven destined that this joyous consummation should not pass unnoticed and unknown. Hence *Nature*, or rather the God of Nature, displayed in the firmament a splendid phenomenon, to warn an unthinking world that the day of redemption was nigh, and nocturnal visions told the heathen philosophers that a mighty King had risen, and the sons of human wisdom—the first fruits of the Gentiles to Christ—came from the rising of the sun to worship Him who is the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star. But what is still more to be remarked, the *portals* of heaven burst open, and hosts of angelic beings thronged out; and never was the listening ear of night regaled and charmed

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with such enchanting melody, as when the lonely fields of Bethlehem were the scene of heavenly manifestations, and the shepherd watchmen heard the joyous anthems celebrated in angelic strains, of which the burden was, Glory to God and grace to man, and of which the contents were the words of our text, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In this single sentence there is contained a great mass of solid truth. It sets forth the Divine nature of the Messiah, inasmuch as it applies to Him the Old Testament appellation of Jehovah, or Lord; it sets forth His mediatorial office, as being not so much that of a king, or a teacher, as of a Redeemer; and it sets forth the fulfilment in the history of Jesus of those ancient predictions which signified that Bethlehem-Ephrata should be the place of His nativity. These branches of the subject we pass over, and propose to confine our attention chiefly to the first clause of the verse; that is to say, we shall advert, not so much to the subject of the message, or the author of it, or the accessories of it, as to the objects of it: "Unto you is born—a Saviour." But even here there is included a variety of topics. For example, there might from this expression be deduced with great force and clearness the Saviour's doctrine, that the poor are pre-eminently the persons to whom the Gospel call is addressed. We single out only one truth for illustration, however, and it is one of the most important of them all, viz.: that the Gospel is a personal message—a special, individual, and definitive proposal—addressed, not vaguely and generally to all, but minutely and particularly to each. "Unto you," said the angel to

the shepherds—"Unto you is born a Saviour." The objective personality of the Gospel message is therefore the subject of our discourse. Let us, *first*, contemplate the meaning of this property; *secondly*, consider its importance; and, *thirdly*, try to make, each for ourselves, a right use of it.

First. What is meant by the personal nature of the Gospel message will, perhaps, stand out more distinctly to our apprehension by the exemplification than by the mere description of it. Let us, therefore, endeavour to illustrate the matter. *First*, by the case mentioned in the text itself. The angel who first appeared to the shepherds, and prepared their minds for understanding the import of the seraphic minstrelsy that so soon greeted their ears, told them at once the nature, the design, and the object of the Gospel, when he said, "I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." He was the herald of a better than the Jewish dispensation. He announced the commencement of an economy which, unlike that of Moses, embraced not the seed of Israel merely, but all the nations, and peoples, and tribes of the earth. He foretold that the Saviour should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of His people Israel. He knew, therefore, that the Gospel which he preached was no limited, no narrow, no exclusive system. He knew that the ends of the earth should see it and rejoice in it, as the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. He knew that all kingdoms should be blessed in Jesus, and that all generations should call Him blessed. He not only knew, but declared, that the advent of the Saviour would be glad tidings of joy—of great joy—to all

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people. And yet, addressing himself to the humble shepherds, exclusively of all else, he said, "Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Now, observe the full meaning of this statement. It clearly implies something that is direct and personal. It implies that these shepherds were placed in a most peculiar position; that they were involved in a definite relation; that they were included somehow in God's mighty purposes. The Saviour was born for them. He, the seed of the woman, who had been foretold to Adam in Paradise; He on whom the patriarchs looked with the eye of adoring faith; who was a pillar of confidence to afflicted Job, a promised Son and Saviour to Abraham, the giver of a new name to Jacob; He who was the hope of the ends of the earth, and was to the spiritual what the rainbow is to the natural world, the *guarantee* of its *peace* and *welfare*—this mighty deliverer is described by the angel to the shepherds as having been raised up for them, as having come for their salvation, as having put on for them the nature of lowly humanity. "Unto you is born this day, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Here, then, my brethren, may we see what the personality of the Gospel message is. It singles out each particular individual to whom it is addressed, and, detaching him from all other considerations but the consideration of himself, tells him that on him God's omniscient eye is fixed—that towards him the purposes of eternity have referred—that for him the high counsels of heaven have been consulted—that for him God has made most extensive and mighty preparation—that for him the gift of salvation has been provided—that in his

ears it is preached—that at the door of his heart its message is knocking—and that, in short, the Gospel is a scheme of communication between himself and God—a personal message which God sends to him as such, and which, as such, he ought to receive. The mode in which the angel preached the Saviour to the wondering shepherds naturally led them to view the Saviour in the light which we have described; for no sooner had the notes of the celestial anthem, with which the heavenly host closed the miraculous scene, died away, than the spell-bound listeners left their flocks and hastened, with all the *alacrity* and *enthusiasm* of gladdened hearts, to inquire into the fulfilment of the angel's disclosure—to see the child born, and the Son given unto them—and, in the manger of Bethlehem, to look upon the wonderful, the wise, the mighty, the divine Prince of Peace.

In the *second* place, let us endeavour to explain the personality of the Gospel message from the way in which it is addressed to sinners in general. The mode in which it was preached to the shepherds is, indeed, exactly descriptive of the way in which it is preached to all others. It is a message of glad tidings to every person who has it delivered to him; and if it be delivered to any individual, no matter through what agency, it is to him a message from God, as really, indeed, as if the curtains of heaven had been opened and an angelic herald descended from the presence of Jehovah fraught with the Gospel message of Gospel peace. If a servant have put into his hands a communication purporting to be a command enjoined by his master, that servant, from the

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very fact of its being given to him, will see it to be his implied duty to execute the commandment in question; and if, in addition to this, the document be endorsed with his *name*, and most specifically addressed to him, then it will carry all the weight and authority of the master who wrote it. In like manner, the very fact of a revelation from heaven being in our possession, ought of itself to draw towards that revelation our most attentive regards. If, in the miraculous signatures and credentials which attest its genuineness, the signs and wonders which accompanied its introduction, and the internal symptoms which it contains of its heavenly origin—if, in all these, we find reason to listen to the Scriptures, as being the oracles of God, then the account which they give of themselves most plainly indicates that we are the individuals to whom they are sent, and for whom they are designed. There is not a mark, not a trace, not a lineament of the sinner's heart that is not described and represented in the Bible. Now, these are the indications of the persons to whom the Bible is sent; and every person whose character, and nature, and habits are such as it describes—every person who can read in his own heart those same truths which the Bible declares—every person who sees himself to be what the Bible so plainly sets forth—every such person, we say, is the individual for whom God dictated the Bible, and to whom He sends the message of salvation. The Gospel, then, is a special call. Vastly comprehensive is the adaptation of it, great the need of it; but it is an individual message to individual sinners. It does not present a *general*, but a specific remedy. And hence, within his own

bosom, every individual of Adam's fallen family may find the proofs of his being the person to whom the message of the Gospel is sent ; for there he finds those wants which the Gospel proposes to supply, those defects which the Gospel proposes to remove, those pollutions which the Gospel proposes thoroughly to purge. Unto him does he thus find that the salvation of free grace is *adapted* and *desirable* ; and both the book of his *own heart* and the book of the Divine law concur to demonstrate that the purposes of God take hold of his individual case, and have provided for it a full and a free salvation. The salvation that is in Christ Jesus, therefore, belongs, when considered merely as an offer, to all mankind. It is offered to every man who hears the Gospel proclaimed, and offered not merely as a *general boon* for the common good of all the poor and the needy, but as a special gift to each individual. The individual who hears the joyful sound is as fully warranted to appropriate for himself the blessings of salvation as if he was the only person on earth that ever needed them. The shepherds of Bethlehem were the only individuals whom the angel, when he spoke to them, specified as the persons for whose sake the Messiah was born ; and in like manner may we single out sinners of the present day, and tell them, and that most emphatically too, that, unto them is born a Saviour. He is not merely the High Priest and Redeemer of all people,—but He is held out as the hope of salvation of each separate individual, not indeed as having conveyed—or being assuredly to convey the whole blessings of His *purchase* to every individual upon earth :—but as being suitable in this *capacity*, for

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all, as being offered in this capacity to all. It is mutilating the truth to say that Christ has purchased a complete redemption in the abstract,—and that it is only needed for sinners to appropriate it in order to their justification and acceptance:—as if, until they accepted it it was a matter with which they had nothing to do. No, my friends—this is not the case. There is not a child of Adam, who is not in some respect implicated in, or connected with God's purposes of mercy. For it must not be thought that, because sinners walk in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, they have therefore no sort of interest in God's gracious plans towards earth. They have in truth, a deep, a momentous interest in them:—and even although they should in the end, come short, through unbelief—the fact of that interest—that valuable but neglected and abused interest, will be demonstrated in the more than conceivable wrath of the Lamb, which—throughout all eternity will be their portion. Unto every sinner therefore is the message of Christ's salvation sent, as certainly, as really, as if, besides that individual sinner, Satan held no captive. "Unto you was born this Saviour"—is a declaration which may be accepted by every individual in whose hearing it is now repeated. The glad tidings which it involves, are not held in abeyance, till the sinner spontaneously and cordially embrace them; but they are the property of all who hear them. The manna in the wilderness was accessible to the people only who then went out of their tents to gather it on the ground. No person could get a supply without diligently collecting it. If the labour was declined, then hunger and want were the

consequence. But the *celestial manna*, which nourishes spiritual life is gathered up and offered gratuitously to all them that hunger and thirst. It is offered to all the needy and the perishing. "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters." Now, accept whoever may, of this invitation—listen, whoever may, to this mandate—unto them when they so listen and accept, may it be said: "Unto you is born a Saviour;" "Christ the Lord," who is the author and the end of salvation, has died for sinners—and you are such; He came to seek the lost—and you are such; He came to heal the diseased—and you are such; He came to do and to suffer for the sake of the wretched—and you are such. Unto you, therefore, He is born—unto you he has come—unto you he now speaks, and beseeches you Himself to be reconciled unto God. Oh! what a momentous and responsible position is that which man now occupies! When Christ has humbled Himself, and suffered and died for sinners—the *fact* of *His* thus acting invests them with consequence, which will give a new colour, and a morally modified aspect to their being through all eternity. What our Lord has done to a world, He has done for a mighty multitude of individuals, who live and move in that world. What He has spoken to all who have read His word, He says to every separate individual who forms a part of that number. And consequently, the Gospel Message is just as personally addressed to every sinner, as if God had summoned him to appear in His presence, as of old He did to Moses at the burning bush, and told him that all the mighty apparatus of redemption had been planned and constructed for his individual sake.

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Secondly.—Let us consider now, the important results that flow from this doctrine—that the Gospel call is specially addressed to every individual sinner. It is a trite and universally conceded fact, that, if a duty be imposed upon a large mass of men generally—without any explicit charges being given them—it is unquestionable that it will be much less carefully attended to than if it had been intrusted to individual management. It is clear, therefore, when we apply this maxim to the illustration of the doctrine before us—that the Gospel call to sinners will be regarded as of more importance when it is addressed to the heart of any man, as his own personal concern, than when it is represented merely as the abstract duty of all created beings. In illustration of this part of the subject it may *first* be remarked—that the personality of the Gospel Message deepens the responsibility of those to whom the message comes. Jonah's refusal to go to Nineveh was a sin of which one of the most peculiar aggravations was this: that he was the one person, on *whom* the duty of alarming that corrupt city devolved. Had the command of God been imposed upon the people of Israel generally, the peculiar case of Jonah in refusing to do what he was bound to perform, but not more bound than were thousands of his countrymen besides, would have been, not blameless indeed, but less eminently reprehensible and flagrant than it was. Had the intimation of the angel to the shepherds announced that the Saviour, who had sprung up in the city of David, was ordained generally to give light to them that sat in darkness, without there being any notice taken of His relation to them, they would

not have felt themselves nearly so much called on to forsake their professional avocations, in order to enquire into this singular revelation; but when the declaration was "Unto you is born a Saviour," there was instantly presented to their contemplation a sense of responsible duty, a feeling of imperative obligation, to enquire into what so intimately concerned themselves. They, accordingly, as we have seen, set out with eager haste, to the place where the infant Saviour lay. Now, when sinners are brought to see that the offers of the Gospel are not a mere formal hypothesis but an *actual* arrangement—not an *abstract* and general communication, but a personal message to themselves—they are arrested by the home-coming nature of the address; they feel themselves singled out by omniscience as the objects of God's almighty schemes, and the terrors of the Lord take hold of their spirits; they feel that they are not *left* to act as they choose; that they are not free to live to themselves, but that God has done great things for them, having them in His eye, and speaking to them through the medium of His Word, and gracious ordinances. Formerly they listened to the Gospel invitation as something which they ought in strictness to reverence and obey, but which bore no definite relation to themselves personally considered, as something which they could properly enough estimate, in the way in which David estimated Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb, when the guilty monarch denounced the spoiler of the poor man's joy as worthy of death; but when brought to see the truth in all its scriptural fulness, sinners feel themselves as did David, when the prophet turned

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round about upon him, and shot a keen arrow into his conscience with the heart-searching words, "Thou art the man." He who believes that God has *on his account* sent forth His Son, and given Him to the death for us all, must look upon himself with feelings widely different from those of the nominal professor, who regards the Gospel invitation and warnings only from a distance; and we *may* believe that Christ was given to the death for us all, in a way perfectly compatible with the scriptural doctrine that He died only for the elect as an actual and perfect Redeemer; for we speak of the adaptation of the Gospel, and not of its results.

But *secondly*—the personality of the Gospel message is calculated to facilitate and strengthen the act of faith. Believing in certain qualities and properties which exist in the Divine mind, is a very different thing from believing that God has actually summoned us by ordinances addressed to us, to accept of salvation through the blood of His Son. Now the Gospel call actually tells us that, in virtue of our being sinners, we are the persons—the very persons—whom it invites. Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that whoever of the agonized Israelites looked upon it might recover from their pains; so the offer of Christ is made to all who hear the glad tidings of Salvation; therefore it is only necessary to listen to these tidings, to embrace these offers, to believe these truths, in order to obtain everlasting life. Faith is a Divine gift beyond the power of human production, but it is imparted through the medium of the faculties of the mind; and when these faculties rightly apprehend revealed truth, the power of faith becomes

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fuller and stronger. Of course the character of an individual's faith is much modified by the views which that faith embraces. Hence, if our faith rest on vague and indistinct notions concerning the groundwork of Christian truth, it will be *fluctuating* and uncertain. But when we lay hold of the great truth that we get a perfect and indisputable right to the Salvation of the Gospel in consequence of God Himself offering it to us, in an express message of His own, addressed expressly to us, then may faith be exerted with invigorated energy; for we stand on a more than adamant rock, and the gates of Hell itself shall not prevail against us; "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

Thirdly—The personality of the Gospel Message excites and fosters the spirit of love in the believer's heart. "We love Him," says the Christian of His God, "because He first loved us." And how do we know that He first loved us? Why, because He sent His Son into the world for us—that we, through Him might be saved! There are those who study the life of our Saviour with cold and uninterested indifference, but if in every feature, and every scene, and every stage of it, we couple the obedience of the Saviour, with the consideration that He wrought it out for our *sakes*; if we sympathize in all His sufferings, because we believe that He endured them in order to purchase Salvation for us; if we meditate on His death with the devout and deeply impressed feeling, that He died in order that He might deliver from the fear of death us, who, all our life

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long, are subject to bondage. Oh! if we cherish such views as these, and identify Christ's doings for us, with His offers to us—surely the love of the Saviour will constrain us to love Him, as all our hope and joy, who gave Himself for our sakes, that we might live through Him and obtain from Him all the fulness of grace here and glory hereafter, which He keeps for them that love Him. The fact that we who are sinners were, while yet in a natural and unregenerate state, the objects of the Saviour's love and mercy, is, when firmly believed, calculated to deepen the feelings of attachment and devotedness which His true followers all cherish. If God, in His infinite compassion, has provided for us blessings of infinite and eternal value; and if these are offered to us, without money and without price; if, while we are pursuing the world, and altogether engrossed with its cares and seductions, our minds be suddenly arrested by the fact, that God has, at a mighty cost, provided for us a complete and glorious Salvation, surely our love will be quickened, and our hearts surrendered to the influence of deep and abiding gratitude to Him, who, while we were despising His authority, so graciously provided for us a ransom and deliverance.

Lastly, the personality of the Gospel message is calculated to animate the spirit of obedience. Human and self-originated righteousness is an abomination in the sight of a pure and holy God, but the righteousness which is of Christ by faith, and which is imputed to the soul of every believer, is communicated by the Spirit, through the agency of sound and scriptural views of Divine truth. Now, when the eye of faith embraces the

view which our text reveals; that is to say, when we become persuaded that the Salvation of the Gospel is intended for us, is sent to us, and is offered to us; when we reflect that He who thus holds out to us the offer and hopes of eternal life is the object of our natural enmity and dislike; and that, notwithstanding all this, He is crowning us with His loving kindness and tender mercy; when we reflect on these things, the natural influence of such views, is to call forth, not merely the determination henceforth to know nothing else but Christ Jesus, and Him crucified, but the purpose of a holy and obedient life, according to the standard of the Divine law. Of all motives to a righteous and godly conversation in the world, *none* is so efficient and operative, as that which flows from a sense of interest in Christ; and accordingly when we, by faith, appropriate the Gospel offer, and believe that unto us and for us, the Saviour has been born, we learn through the assistance of Divine teaching, to live henceforth no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again; we seek to be crucified, with our Redeemer, to sin and the world, and we rise with Him to newness of life, and walk no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Thus then, when we are persuaded of the truth of our being singled out by God, as the objects to whom He offers His choicest mercies, we feel ourselves animated and stimulated to live unto righteousness unto Christ and to God.

In the *third* and last place let us, by way of application, attempt to make a right personal and practical use of the doctrine of the text. There are many professing Christians who count them-

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selves heirs of the grace of God, and who yet, never embraced, as truly their own, the blessings of Christ's purchase. To believe that Christ holds a mediatorial office in the economy of Heaven—to believe that He has made expiation for human guilt—to admit the abstract merits of his atonement—and to confide in His mercy thus illustriously displayed, is not all that sinners are required and privileged to do. They are commanded to accept of Christ Jesus, as their Saviour and Redeemer—to believe that He has been sent for them and that, if they believe in Him, they shall be saved. The wells of salvation will not refresh our souls, even though overflowing with living water, unless we come to drink out of them. The blood of the paschal lamb would not have saved the first-born of Israel, even although the destroying angel was sent only to smite the families of Egypt, unless the Hebrews had sprinkled their door-posts with that blood of propitiation. And sinners will not see the salvation, even although it is offered to the chief of sinners, unless they, in the exercise of faith, believe that the message of Divine love has been sent to them, and been offered to them. "Unto you, Oh sinner," is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. This is the sum and substance of the Gospel message. It is a saying worthy of all acceptance; for it is the basis and foundation of a sinner's hope. Now, a vague and cold admission of the leading facts of Scripture revelation, is not putting credence in this personal Gospel message. David's belief that Saul would have a successor on the throne of Judah, was very different from his assurance that he was himself destined to that *high office*. The pupil of Gamaliel

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believing that God would raise up a Redeemer in Zion, who should turn away ungodliness from Jacob, was very different from the apostle Paul, believing that Christ Jesus had died for the expiation of his sins. And, in like manner, our formal knowledge of Christ's mediatorship and intercession, will avail us nothing, unless we build our eternal hopes on His eternal promises, and trust the veracity of an unchangeable God, when he says specifically and individually to us, that, "Unto us is born the Saviour who is Christ the Lord." In order to obtain personal salvation we must cherish personal faith, and how can that be personal faith which, when it looks at the Saviour, never connects His doings and sufferings, with his own *individual circumstances*? Noah's assurance that the buoyant framework of his ark would float securely and triumphantly over the billows of a shoreless world, would not have saved him unless he had, in good time, embarked in it. No more will the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness deliver from wrath one single sinner, unless, in addition to the abstract conviction of a Saviour's all-sufficiency, the sinner flee to Him for refuge, and embrace Him as his own Saviour—his own personal deliverer, set forth for his free acceptance in the promises of the Gospel. He is offered as explicitly to us, as if we were the only sinners in the world; as explicitly to every one sinner, as if the world contained only one rebel against God; and, it is ours to embrace Him, as thus offered—to embrace Him as if He died exclusively for our offences and rose exclusively for our justification. Our gain, if we do so, will be as great as if, in fact, we were the only persons whom Christ redeemed. Our loss if

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we do not, will be as great, as if we alone, of universal creation, were the individuals who despised and crucified Him. Oh, let us therefore, *embrace* with all our souls, the blessed truth which Seraphs first revealed, and trust in Him who was born to us as a Saviour; and then shall we greatly rejoice in the Lord; our souls shall be joyful in our God. "He shall clothe us with the garments of salvation, and cover us with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Like aged Zachariah, we shall be enabled to sing "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of His servant David."

Amen and Amen.

IV.

NATURE AND EVIDENCES OF DIVINE SONSHIP.

“Come, Holy Spirit, seal the grace
On my expanding heart,
And show that in the Father’s love
I share a filial part.”

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—ROMANS viii. 14.

AFTER a long and masterly reply to those who objected that the Gospel afforded encouragement to sin, the sacred writer comes, in the twelfth verse of this chapter, to apply the principles which he has established, and to shew the influence which they ought to exert over the conduct and life of believers. If it be true, he argues, that the natural disposition of all mankind is hatred and hostility to God—that the human heart is in open rebellion against Him, and is so supremely and radically corrupted as only to obey, only to be willing to obey, only to be able to obey the law of sin; if it be true that all who really believe the Gospel are in Christ Jesus, sanctified in Him, as well as saved through His blood; and if it be true, finally, that the fact of salvation—the hope, the joy, and the heavenly peace of salvation, belong, and exclusively belong, to those who are subject to the law of God, and gladly obey it—then, most clear it is, that living after the flesh, or, which is the same thing, giving the reins to every dictate of the natural mind, must by the professing Christian be on no account whatever indulged in, because deliberate, and wilful, and systematic

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iniquity is not only not compatible with justification by free grace, but is diametrically opposed to it, since the process by which Justification becomes ours is the incipient step of a complex operation, all of whose parts are so inseparably connected that the absence of one part infers the absence of all the rest. If, therefore, an individual have come within the influence of any part of this process, he must have come within the influence of the whole of it. The process has for its remotest link, on the one side, a predestinating decree, and on the other side the sanctification and complete redemption of those on whom it takes effect. The mind of man, however, cannot take such a vastly and sweepingly comprehensive view of it. The limits of his horizon display, on the one hand, belief of the Gospel, and on the other, a transformation of the nature in all its outward manifestations. Intermediately betwixt these steps there occur several changes, which take place only after faith has been formed, and before sanctification is completed, and which, though they may in their application to him who is the recipient of them be co-eval with the implantation of faith, are yet probably in their own abstract nature matters of sequence, because matters of successive causation, and, at all events, develop their fruits and influences upon the heart in gradual and progressively enlarging fulness. Peace, joy, love, and all the other evidences of Sonship or adoption, constitute these buds and blossoms of regenerated nature. Now, since all these various and accumulated characters are essentially dependent on each other, and never can occur separately, it follows that the certain absence of one primary quality vitiates the

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whole individual nature in which this imperfection occurs; for then it behoves that the process of restoration must be altogether wanting, inasmuch as in this case the absence of the part implies the absence of the whole. If a tree be planted in a soil so genial, and under a heaven so propitious, that only the forthputting of the energies of vegetable life is needed to make it fruit-bearing, and there be supposed to be guaranteed to it the smiles of every season, then, in this case, we rest assured as to the result, that if the tree have a single particle of vitality within it, it will breathe forth the bloom of spring, and display the foliage of summer, and bend under the fruit of autumn; and if these results do not occur, then the inevitable conclusion is that the tree had no life at all. Now, the condition guaranteed to man is just that which we supposed in this instance to be guaranteed to the tree. In other words, we know, as an accredited and indisputable fact, that if the first elements of spiritual life exist in him, the decorations, the splendid beauties of the Christian character, and the fruits of spiritual righteousness, will follow as a matter of course. To all those who are in Christ Jesus, He is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. We cannot see the germ of spiritual, any more than physical life, pervading the inner man. We know it only by its results. These are here stated to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification. Now, if there be none of these characteristic marks, neither can there be that of which they are marks. The religious professors, therefore, who want holiness of heart and life are not in Christ Jesus. So that, let a man's character, and talents, and life be what

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they may, if he want the spirit of righteousness, he is yet dead in trespasses and sins. If ye walk after the flesh, and obey the principles of action congenial to the unrenewed mind, ye shall die; but if, through the spirit, ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, and seek to lead a life of faith and holiness, ye shall live; and just for this reason, that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, and no more than these, are the sons of God. Let us in illustration of this position, enquire—*First*, What is the import of the phraseology, Sons of God? and *secondly*, How men are, by the agency of the Spirit, manifested to be Sons of God?

First.—With regard to the former topic—the import of the expression here applied to describe believers—it may be remarked that the phrase, son, or sons, of God, is so familiarized to our ears by its frequent occurrence in Scripture, and by the common use of it in theological language, that when we employ it we do not at all advert to its figurative and analogical application, but set it down as plain, familiar, and simple fact; and yet it is a phrase which is strikingly and essentially metaphorical. It couples with the name of Him who is unchangeable and infinite, a relation which exclusively belongs to the *animal creature*. It connects the character and condition of man with the absolute perfection of God. It applies finite distinction to an infinite object; earthly affinities, to a heavenly Being; adventitious qualities, to a spiritual and all-glorious Agent. It, in short, describes the unseen by the seen; the incomprehensible, by the comprehensible; and the unknown, by the familiar. It represents the links which connect heaven and

earth by the links which on earth connect men with one another. The extent or limitation of the import of the term "sons of God," is to be gathered from the nature and capabilities of the objects to whom it is applied. These are human beings, creatures formed for happiness and good, but corrupted by their own guilt, and sunk in trespasses and sins. In this capacity they cannot be sons of God in any higher sense than that in which all other creatures may be distinguished by this appellation. But, in a redeemed and regenerated state, which involves deliverance from guilt and wrath, they stand forth in an attitude as high, or even higher, than that which they originally occupied,—that is, they become susceptible of that progressive exaltation in grace and glory, with the bestowal of which the great Heavenly Father blesses His children. They never can rise to that unmeasured altitude of grandeur and majesty, which are the essential and untransferable properties of God Himself; they never can attain to the possession of a nature other than created and dependent, and subject to limitation, for infinitude and independence belong exclusively to Jehovah: but, they can be "clothed upon" with the communicable attributes of His all-perfect nature; they can be invested with the properties and gifts, the possession of which—on the part of the angels—constitutes between them and their gracious Master the bond of so intimate a relation; they can be adorned with qualities so exquisitely fair, that the eye of Omniscience may look on them well pleased, and pronounce of them what He did of the blushing dawn of the infant world, that all which they disclose is very good. Now, it is just

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the assimilating to the Divine character of all in human nature, that, without doing violence to it, can possibly be assimilated to the Divine character, which constitutes Sonship to God. It is just knitting the creature into the closest possible bond of union with the Creator, which constitutes adoption into the great family of Heaven. The relationships of earth are constituted such by earthly ties. The affinities of blood, and the affiances of marriage are the primary links which form the groups and families of our material world. But the spirituality of the unseen state is too lofty and ethereal to admit such connecting bonds as these. It is not the grossness of materialism, but living sympathy of soul, which unites the great family of God's children. They are held together by a spiritual and invisible power, whose existence is undisturbed by those changes and revolutions, to which death subjects the house of our earthly pilgrimage. The human spirit may have its moral and religious feelings influenced in the trains of their exercise, by the relationships and domestic ties of this present life ; but no farther on the complexion of that spirit can such relationships and ties possess any control. Death dissolves the unions and fellowships which, in the pilgrimage of life, were founded and maintained. The moment that the pilgrims attain death's farther shore, the connections of time are lost sight of, the affinities of blood are worn out, and it is only in virtue of spiritual affinities that thenceforward any distinctions are made. The family of God are then singled out by the grand predominating family likeness which they all wear. This likeness it is which forms the Sonship described in our text. And Oh! my friends,

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what a magnificent privilege must that adoption be, which, imparted as it is to all believers, sublimates the soul above the earthliness of this world—takes hold and fastens upon our nature in a way far more durable than sublunary friendships, and sublunary ties can do—outlives the distinctions and peculiarities of time, and establishes an intimate and endeared communion with God Himself, bringing the soul into immediate fellowship with Him; and, just as the heavenly bodies sweep in incessant revolutions round their central sun, true to that attractive influence which binds them in their appointed course, and, as incapable on the one hand of dashing against their commanding guiding luminary as they are, on the other, of being torn away from the reach of his power, so the children of God, gladdened by the everlasting irradiation of His smile, bask for ever in the sunshine of His presence, and are just as incapable, when once united to Him, of ever, on the one hand, swerving from their first relation to Him, as, on the other, they are incapable of climbing the mysterious, untrodden, and measureless heights of uncreated and unapproachable glory, which is the presence-chamber and secret place of the Most High. Such, then, are the high privileges and prerogatives of the sons of God. They are linked to the Eternal by a bond which, having been constructed by Omnipotence, nothing but Omnipotence can sever. They are in a double sense the children of the great Father of all. They have received from Him the breath both of literal and spiritual life; and they have received, or shall receive, from Him all that human capacity can receive and infinite wisdom bestow. A resemblance

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of character hence originates, there being imparted to the creature whatever of God's infinite fulness can be ingrafted on the nature of man. That is, of course, comparatively little, as contrasted with what is in God; but it is enough to exalt men to a degree of holiness and happiness such as shall admit of no mitigation and no alloy. If it be asked what the family likeness consists in, which believers possess in virtue of their being sons of God, it may be replied that it comprehends the whole of that fulness of God which is treasured up in Christ Jesus for the express purpose of being applied to His people; and, therefore, whatever of the Divine excellences and perfections is communicable constitutes, as existing in believers, a badge or evidence of their heavenly adoption. But, more particularly, sonship in reference to God implies, *secondly*, mutual love. The son is, in domestic life, a character of endearment and affection. He is the object of the father's warm attachment and regard. The son reciprocates the same feeling towards his parent, and loves him with correspondent feelings. Now, it is owing to the depth and intensity of the mutual attachment which subsists between father and son that Jehovah, in order to indicate His love to His creatures, calls Himself their Father who is in heaven, and condescends to designate them and treat them as His own sons. "Behold with what manner of love the Father hath loved us, that we should be called the sons of God." Those who are inducted into the rank and privileges of God's children, therefore, are, on the one hand, the objects of His complacent regard, inasmuch as He Himself introduces them into this blessed state; and, on the

other hand, they love Him as their Supreme Father, for, what blessing do they enjoy that comes not from Him; what grace have they received that flows not from Him; what glory do they anticipate that is not promised by Him? In truth, the blessedness of God's children far surpasses that which their designation would intimate. They are called sons, because, when we examine and exhaust the vocabulary of human affection, there occurs no epithet more appropriate, or endearing; and it is applied, therefore, not because it is sufficient to express the idea, but because the pauperism of human language and human thought, cannot afford a term more adequate to express the fulness of God's love. Strictly speaking, then, the language of human affection cannot embody the value of the relation which subsists between believers and God. "Can a woman," says the Prophet, speaking in the person of Jehovah,— "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea: they may forget. Yet will I not forget thee." "Behold," says Jehovah to His people, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands: thy walls are continually before Me." So vast, then, and incalculable is the love of God to His people; and, if debt infer obligation—then, what all-absorbing love is that which believers are bound to yield to their Heavenly Father. *Thirdly*, Sonship implies sameness of character. In the case of the earthly relation, it implies absolute identity of nature. It implies as much in reference to Christ, because His nature is Divine; but in reference to man, it cannot imply this, inasmuch as human nature is incompatible in the case of mere men with such an idea.

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Man's being the son of God signifies his being like God in all things in which he can be like Him. It implies, therefore, his receiving a new and heavenly nature, a pure and sanctified heart, a holy and obedient will. It implies his being born from above, not of the will of man, but of God. It implies his being renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. The sons of God are the holy creatures of God, who are united to Him by their resemblance to His perfections, and by drinking of His fulness.

Moreover,—Sonship implies sameness of interest. A divided family cannot stand : hence all the members of a rightly constituted family are united in their interests and plans. Thus it is with the family of God. All His children have His spirit, and do His will. They seek to love what He loves. His commands are what they desire to do. His precepts are the support and joy of their hearts. His statutes are their song in the house of their pilgrimage. All who belong to the great family above, therefore, have a fellow-feeling and sympathy in their souls, by which they may be discriminated from careless worldlings. They subject things to a spiritual calculation : they weigh them by a totally different standard from what the latter employ. Their feelings and desires do not concentrate in self, but like the Hebrew exiles in Babylon, they esteem the prosperity of Zion and the glory of Jehovah as the most desirable objects of solicitude and love, saying : “ If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning ; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”

Lastly—Sonship implies sameness of society, and the sons of God enjoy, therefore, the Divine fellowship. They are, while in this world, in a state chequered by many an alternation of repose and trouble; but they enjoy communion with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. They are partakers of a relationship, which being spiritual and invisible, the world sees not and knows not. But, it is not on that account the less certain and solid. It is nurtured on earth, and it is perfected in heaven. The believer can approach God at all times, and in the spirit of adoption, he can say to Him “Abba Father.” He can approach Christ at all times, for Christ beseeches His people to dwell in Him, and with Him. And He is with the Holy Spirit at all times, for His soul is a temple in whose sanctuary the Spirit loves to dwell. The believer likewise enjoys the society of the whole communion of the saints, for the bond of peace holds them all in the unity of the spirit—the unity of the Church itself being not less infallible than the unity of the Spirit; because, not more certainly is the spirit one, than the body is one—all called in the hope of one calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all. But the full manifestation of the privileges of sonship is deferred till there be ministered to the believer an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And, therefore, all who are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of sonship or adoption, experience, in reference to their character and condition, the feelings expressed by the apostle, when he said.—“We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved,

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we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ; if so be, that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened ; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." But we hasten now to the *Second* topic which springs out of the text ; viz. : how men are, by the agency of the Spirit, constituted sons of God. We have seen what it is to be sons of God. We have found this title to include all of the Divine perfections and beatitudes that could be shared by a creature, involving also the counterpart emotions, which the recipient ought to cherish towards His Heavenly Father, when he is thus blessed by Him. In a word, believers are sons of God, because God loves them and they love Him ; because His character is theirs also ; His will, theirs also ; His society, theirs also. Now, the predicate of our text is, that the guidance of the Spirit is the instrument or agency, by which those who believe the Gospel, are made sons of God ; and the point for our determination is to ascertain how this agency of the Spirit invests these individuals with the title-deeds of such a heritage, and the joys of such an adoption. In illustration of this point, let it be remarked in the *first* place that the Spirit makes believers to be the sons of God, inasmuch as it removes the barriers and antipathies by which man was previously excluded from the Divine presence. God is willing to be reconciled to sinners ; but sinners are in their unregenerate state, unwilling to be recon-

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ciled to God. The carnal mind is enmity—unmitigated and implacable enmity against God; and is not subject to His law, neither indeed, can be. It is, indeed, a phenomenon perfectly unparalleled in the whole circle of human knowledge and observation; and, on the principles of those who reject the doctrine of man's radical depravity, it is an inexplicable, an unaccountable phenomenon that the human mind will still study anything rather than God, whom it ought, superlatively to study; and will love anything more than God, whom it ought, supremely to love. It will ransack the very universe of matter with the most ardent enthusiasm; but no sooner is its attention directed to that Mighty Architect who has constructed and organized all things, and in whose magnificent works only a part of His perfections, and how small a part, is enshrined, than the mind, in place of being more deeply than at other times entranced with wonder and ecstasy, becomes all at once unsatisfied and uneasy, regards that Mighty Being with aversion or dislike, and is incapable of its usual strength and elasticity, till it descends from the contemplation of the exalted Creator, to the unimportant and trivial objects with which He has replenished and adorned the universe. But it is not merely the fact of the human mind being least willing to contemplate that object, whose grandeur gives Him the highest claims on our attention: there is to be added to this, the fact, that that object or Being has, in consequence of His beneficence to His creatures, a paramount and most righteous claim upon their affectionate gratitude. The intrinsic glories of the Divinity render Him infinitely worthy of our adoring contemplation; but the propriety

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becomes deep debt when in addition to His desert there is added our obligation on account of our dependence on Him as our Creator. And yet this is not all; for every pulse of life, every motion, every act we perform, is a fresh pledge of God's goodness and love, and ought to drive more deeply home to our hearts the conviction of our obligations to God. Every principle of action within us thus finds in God's conduct towards us a legitimate stimulus and incentive, and yet we are by nature averse to think of Him. The very animals, which are void of reason, if they be treated with continued kindness, will fawn upon their benefactor. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider." Now, all this fearful antipathy, which has such a radical and subtle place in the human heart, is destroyed by the mighty power of the Divine Spirit leading it in the way of love and peace; for, although the enmity of unrenewed nature is violent and powerful, the energy of the Spirit of God subdues and destroys it. This heavenly agent gives a new motive power and bias to the whole frame, eradicating what is evil, purifying what is polluted, strengthening what is weak, eliminating what is earthly, and transforming all that is unshapely and unseemly into one splendid, infinite, and immortal semblance of all that is lovely and all that is grand. In the *second* place, the Spirit makes believers to be the sons of God, not merely because it removes the obstacles which prevent men's returning to their Maker, but because it assimilates or likens them to God. It leads and guides them; that is to say, it not only breathes into them the breath of heavenly

life, and quickens them together with Christ, but dwells in them as an abiding principle, fortifies them with spiritual vigor, and makes them to grow up in the image of Him who created them, even in the similitude of His wisdom, righteousness and true holiness. The guidance of the Spirit of God involves not merely safety, but holiness—not merely justification, but sanctification—not merely being in Christ, but being like Christ. For mark what that guidance consists in. It is not a passive and inefficient condition. It is an active process, and which never ceases to develop and expand till it have fitted the soul for *immortal glory*. It leads the soul from earth to heaven—from the pleasures of sin to the pleasures of holiness—from the obedience of the world to the obedience of faith. The sonship mentioned in the text consists, as we have seen, in the possession of the holy qualities and attributes by which God Himself is distinguished. Now, there is no possibility of man in his best state, much less in his fallen condition, gathering into his character those qualities and attributes by his own power. He can obtain them only by their being imparted to him by a Being superior to himself. The office of the Holy Spirit is to effect such a transference or implantation. But, moreover, even if they were implanted, man has not power to retain and strengthen them. The office of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is also to train the believer in the way he should go, and to uphold him in the way everlasting. Hence those who have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, inasmuch as they are actuated by that Spirit, and live in that Spirit, and walk in that Spirit, are obedient to God, for the Spirit also

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is God; and therefore they are God's children. They think as He thinks, feel as He feels, live as He lives, and in the filial piety of their adoring and devout hearts they exclaim, "Abba Father." They, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, and thus breathe the spirit of heaven, and lead a life of heavenly godliness. They are conformed to the Divine image, the Divine will, the Divine character, and they accordingly take their high stand among God's peculiar children. They are redeemed from the curse of the law, and receive the adoption of sons. They are heirs of God through Christ Jesus, being predestinated unto the adoption of children by Him. They have the family character and family badge of God's redeemed ones, and "I will be a Father to them, and they shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." They may be despicable according to the standard of this world's estimation. They may have no heraldic honors and emblazoned escutcheons to testify to the worth of their nobility; but they possess what far outpeers the toys, and the gewgaws, and the baubles of earthly greatness, or ancestral renown. They are the sons of God. They are infinitely more dignified than kings or emperors. They boast not of the idle honors and the empty pageantry of secular grandeur; there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give them at the great day; and their name is enrolled in the imperishable record of the Lamb's Book of Life. They are of the household of God: their fellowship being with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The Spirit who has led them into all these privileges, will lead them still, and they

shall be identified with their Lord in His exulting exclamation : "The King shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord, and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice. Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and has not withholden the request of His lips : for Thou preventest Him with the blessings of goodness. Thou settest a crown of pure gold on His head. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever." But, not to enlarge on all the particulars which are included in the assertion, we may remark in the *third* and last place, that the Spirit makes believers to be the Sons of God inasmuch as He establishes all the natural affinities which should subsist between man and his Maker. These are disrupted and violently torn asunder in consequence of sin, and nothing can re-unite them into compact and permanent order, except the omnipotent energy and wisdom of heaven itself. The faculties of the soul are disorganized when they do not carry the soul to God as its chief good. All rational creation was so constituted at first, as to require rest and reliance on God as an essential requisite to happiness; and hence, misery is the portion of all those who are without God, and without hope in the world. What tremendous disasters would follow the derangement of any of the adjustments of the natural world. The structure of the human body is exquisitely skilful, it being fearfully and wonderfully formed indeed; but what is perhaps still more curious, there exists externally to that body, a subtle, all-pervading atmosphere, whose composition is exactly such as to fit it for the support of the breath of life, and without the existence of which, all the mechanism of the human form would be utterly ineffectual for that pur-

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pose. Again, the lower animals which swarm all over the globe in such countless numbers, are all of them inadequate to provide themselves with nourishment by their own skill and foresight ; and hence, the beneficent provision of God, who causes vegetable nature, like an obedient handmaid to minister to their necessities, and relieve them in every season by appropriate and satisfactory supplies. Now, the condition of the soul in its unconverted state, is just analogous to what the human frame would be without any element to fan the flame of life, or, to what the animal creation would be, were the wants of nature unmet by needful supplies of food. The soul, even when it lies a spiritual wreck, is sensible of its emptiness and misery. But it can not and will not accept of the remedy. And hence, in the work of spiritual restoration accomplished by God through Christ Jesus, those who are brought within the reach of it, are guided by spiritual Divine agency ; They are led by the Spirit of God ; brought into participation of the blessings of God's grace—into the enjoyment of that fulness, which is treasured up in Him ; into the realization of all that the human heart can desire or contain. They no longer cherish the spirit of enmity, the spirit of fear, or the spirit of bondage, but receive the spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit Himself testifying to their souls, that they are the children of God. All the bonds and ligaments, that which unite man to his Maker, Preserver, Redeemer and Sanctifier, are established and confirmed by the agency of the Spirit. All the blessings which flow from God through Christ, are imparted to believers ; for, as they are led by the Spirit, and as the Spirit searches all things, yea the

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deep things of God, He knows what to impart, and He communicates of the fulness of Christ, and grace for grace. The largest capacities of the soul are satisfied, for the Spirit is infinitely able to supply them; and thus believers become all that God intended, and when they become such they are emphatically His sons. In conclusion, let us consider for a moment what must be the blessedness of believers, when, in order to represent it, we have them exhibited as united to God by a tie the most intimate, and when this tie shall never be broken. The sons of God shall never go out, never lose their privileges, never forego their happiness. They cannot die any more; but are equal to the angels, and are the family of God, being children of the resurrection. They are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. They shall share through a great eternity the largest blessings of Divine love, and drink of the joys which are at God's right hand for evermore. But who are they that are the children of God, and how may we know whether we be entitled to the appellation? By this test—that we are led by the Spirit. Many call themselves sons of God in the spirit of pride; many, in the spirit of self-righteousness; many in the spirit of vain delusion. The only safe test is spirituality of heart and life—a body, dead because of sin; a spirit, alive because of righteousness. If this be our character, we are sons of God; if not, we are yet subjects of the wicked one. Oh, that sinners would estimate aright the blessedness they refuse and the salvation they spurn; that they would look at the life of believers, which is guardianship on the part of the Spirit; and that they would look at the state of believers which is, adoption into the great

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family of God. For treasures such as these, what earthly good can compensate? For pleasures such as these, what carnal enjoyments can satisfy? If a man profit nothing by gaining the whole world and losing his own soul, then surely a man will suffer nothing by losing the whole world, if he gain the portion of our text, and be adopted as a son of God. Everlasting joy shall rest on his head. The Lord shall be his everlasting light, and the days of his mourning shall be ended. Amen and amen.

V.

THE CHRISTIAN TRAVELLER.

"How are Thy servants blest, O Lord:
How sure is their defence,
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help, Omnipotence."

"For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country."—HEBREWS xi. 14.

THE Israelites of old travelled through a great wilderness towards the earthly Canaan, a country which is emphatically said to have flowed with milk and honey, and that country they finally reached. In like manner do the people of God travel through this world, as through a dreary wilderness, to another and a better country, even a heavenly; and, accordingly, as such, breathe the Spirit, adopt the maxims, and pursue the course of Christian sojourners; and thus, looking immeasurably above and beyond the present world, they openly and boldly avow that, though in it, they are not of it, that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and thus, saying such things, they plainly declare that they seek a country, whither the ransomed are all travelling, and where they will all finally meet and everlastingly congregate. Our object then, in the sequel, is to consider. *Firstly*,—When an individual begins his journey to the Heavenly Canaan. *Secondly*,—What he may expect on the way. *Thirdly*,—What he needs for his encouragement to proceed; and, *Fourthly*,—The certain and joyful termination of his journey.

First.—Consider *when* the sinner begins his jour-

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ney to the Heavenly Canaan. The Christian life, under the metaphor of a journey, presents us with many striking varieties. Many human sinners spend years on years in this world before they take one step in their journey to the heavens; while others enter upon the journey in the morning of their days, and devote the flower of their lives and the warmth of their affections to the glory of the Redeemer, and the recommendation of a life of holiness. Some, soon after the commencement of their journey, arrive at the Heavenly Canaan, and escape many of the storms of life, and the numerous dangers to which travellers are exposed; while others find the pilgrimage long and tedious, languish under many discouragements, are pressed by many wants, are alarmed by many dangers, threatened by many foes, and endure the pelting of many storms. Some finish the journey with songs of praise and triumph, while others enter the dark valley with many fears, and tremble at the sight of Jordan's dark waters.

But there is one starting-post to which every traveller is brought, and from which he sets out on his journey to heaven, at whatever period of his natural life he begins it. Abraham spent more than seventy years of his natural life before he was brought to the knowledge of the true God, and the way of salvation, through the promised Messiah. During this period he was ignorant of his God, and of himself, loaded with guilt, covered with pollution, having a self-righteous disposition, and placing his confidence in the rites of superstition. But, brought to the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation, by the promised Messiah, his self-righteous spirit was subdued, his guilt and pollution removed by

faith in the righteousness and blood of the promised Messiah. It was then that he commenced his journey from Haran to the land of Canaan. In the same situation is every one in a state of nature, as a descendant of Adam. Ignorant of his character and his danger, he remains in a state of insensibility, impenitence and unbelief. He cherishes a self-righteous disposition, and enjoys a false peace and hope, while he is the slave of sin and of Satan. He is a native of Mount Sinai, born under the curse of a broken covenant, and seeks justification by the deeds of the law, while he is breaking it every day, in thought, word and deed. It is not until the sinner, by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, is delivered from a legal state of insensibility, impenitence and unbelief,—until he is delivered from a self-righteous state and freed from the fetters of sin and Satan, that he turns his back upon the world, and sets forward on his journey to heaven. In the day of power, and the time of love and of espousals, his eyes are opened, his views are changed, and a new and an opposite class of objects arrest his attention. No longer ignorant of the danger to which he is exposed, he has recourse to Christ, “the Way, the Truth and the Life.” No longer impenitent, he bewails the depravity of his heart, the transgression of his life, and the dishonour he has cast upon his God and his Redeemer. Delivered from the darkness and the prejudices of unbelief, he feels the necessity of a Saviour, and looks to Jesus, who is “able to save to the uttermost, all who come to God by Him.” Divested of self-righteousness, he is not only made willing, in the day of God’s great power, to comply with His plan of mercy, but cordially to

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embrace, devotedly to rest upon, and joyfully to triumph in the righteousness of Christ as the only ground of his justification in the sight of the God of infinite holiness. Now, partially holy, he partakes of the inward conformity to the Divine image, and outward conformity to the Divine law, persuaded that "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Such is a brief outline of the change that is produced upon every one, previous to the commencement of his journey to the Heavenly Canaan. He is delivered from a state of insensibility, impenitence, unbelief, and self-righteousness, and receives Christ revealed in the Gospel, as his Prophet, his Priest, and his King. Now, my brethren, have you been made the subjects of this change? The commencement of the spiritual life in the soul is also the commencement of the Christian's journey to the heavenly country. Regeneration is the post from which every traveller starts, at whatever time of his natural life his spiritual journey begins. Previous to regeneration his back is turned upon the Heavenly Canaan; and it is only in the day of regeneration that he turns his face heavenwards, and sets out upon that journey which shall assuredly terminate in the enjoyment of celestial happiness.

Secondly.—Let us look at what the saint may expect on the road. On this part of the subject you may consider the following particulars: 1st. He may expect the ridicule and reproach of his old companions. When a sinner is made a partaker of the regenerating and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, a change is produced not only upon his soul, but also upon his conduct. Deprived of a relish for sin and its pleasures, his old companions are

shunned, and his old employments and pursuits and gratifications are for ever abandoned. Having entered upon the course of holiness, a new class of objects engrosses his attention, and new employments and pursuits and enjoyments engage his soul; but, as this change in his outward life conveys a severe reproof to his old companions, and a determined disavowal of their employments, pursuits and gratifications, a furious conflict for the most part commences. The advocates of sin are not easily silenced, and the most gentle condemnation of their conduct calls forth their ridicule and reproach. One old companion pronounces the man who commences his journey to heaven, as a person destitute of spirit, and who has given way to superstitious fears and alarms. Another exclaims that a deep melancholy has settled upon his spirits, and unfitted him for all enjoyment. Another affirms that some misfortune in life has disordered his mind, and deprived him of the faculty of judging for himself. Another, that he has imbibed the spirit of an enthusiast, and employs the mere whining and the cant of the hypocrite; while another, with more pretensions to friendship, proposes to remove his mistakes, and convince him that religion is an enemy to pleasure and happiness. All of them, by different modes, strive to call the traveller back, and to divert him from his Christian course. Such ridicule and reproaches the Christian traveller may expect. But none of these will justify him in leaving the road for one moment.

Permit me, then, to furnish the Christian traveller with the following cautions. Be on your guard lest you bring an evil report upon the good cause by uncalled-for rigor or by affected severity. Do not

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sullenly reject the gifts of Providence, under a pretence of superior sanctity; receive them gratefully, distribute them cheerfully, enjoy them innocently, give thanks unceasingly. When you profess to set out for the heavenly land, do not become monastic, nor look upon those things as criminal which the goodness of God permits to be used. The pharisaical mantle of superstition's servants does not become a traveller to heaven, and it is generally used as a mere cloak of hypocrisy. Beware, likewise, of driving too furiously in the outset of your journey. Take the cool of the day, and walk with deliberation and judgment; but beware of the opposite extreme. Let not the fear of increasing the rage of your old companions dispose you to become indolent or lukewarm, or in the slightest degree temporizing. Do not tend in the least degree towards licentiousness. Spurn away all temptations to ungodliness. Seek to please no man at the expense of Gospel truth, or by a sinful conformity to the world. Remember that the traveller who endeavours to shun the ridicule and reproach of the irreligious, or thinks to reconcile the practice of religion with conformity unto the world, can neither make advancement in his way to heaven, nor be faithful to his Redeemer.

2nd.—The traveller may expect variations in the state of the weather. This idea is still taken from a view of life as a journey. The traveller may commence his journey with a bright sun and a clear sky, enjoy a refreshing breeze and a delightful prospect; but the noon may scorch him with excessive heat, or the evening chill him with its damp and its cold. In its progress he may behold the heavens gather black-

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ness, the sun enveloped, the rain descend in torrents, the tempest rage, and every surrounding object clothed in darkness. These variations are usually accompanied by a striking difference in the situation and feelings of the traveller. This is descriptive of the situation and the feelings of the Christian on his journey to the Heavenly Canaan. When he enjoys the smiles of his reconciled Father; when he basks under the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and is favored by the gentle breezes of the Spirit's influence, his affections are warm and lively, and his desire after communion with God and the enjoyment of Divine things is vigorous and ardent. Then spiritual and Divine things display all their captivating beauties, and engage the heart of the traveller, and render his journey pleasant and delightful; but when his Father hides His face—when the beams of the Sun of Righteousness are withdrawn, and the influences of the Spirit withheld—his affections become cold and torpid. Then the traveller, like the pinioned eagle, is scarcely able to move, and far less to advance with the rapidity of flight. This the traveller may expect; but comfortable frames, while they are extremely desirable and pleasant, are not by any means the foundation of his safety. The immutability of his God, the everlasting efficacy of Christ's mediatorial work, and the invariable fidelity of the Holy Spirit, are the triple rock on which his salvation rests. Frames may and will vary, but God remaineth faithful and cannot deny Himself. Nor is this all. The traveller on his journey must pass through the fiery region of temptation, and sometimes of persecution, in which the graces of the Spirit and the temper and the dis-

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positions of his mind shall be severely tried. Exposed to the heat of this fiery region, his soul shall long and pray for the cooling shade of the tree of life; while, instead of an immediate answer to his prayers, he enters the cold valley of affliction, and becomes the subject of anxious fears and apprehensions. Because of personal affliction and family distress, the traveller may imagine that the dispensations of Divine Providence are directly opposed to the faithfulness of God in His promises; that the thick clouds of darkness with which he is surrounded are the evident marks of the Divine indignation, and the forerunners of that tempest of Divine wrath which shall terminate in his everlasting destruction. Then a solemn sadness presses upon his spirits, and every surrounding object corresponds with the gloom that envelopes his soul. But let not the Christian traveller despair. These variations are the effects of the climate you now inhabit, and these changes shall operate for your spiritual advantage. The weather-beaten traveller, amidst the buffetings of the tempest, learns to withdraw his affections from the objects by which he is surrounded, and to long more ardently for the rest and enjoyments of his native country.

3rd.—The traveller may expect great varieties in the state of the road. The face of the country from Haran to Canaan was not all alike. The patriarch might find his road at one time smooth, and at another time rough; now, over the mountain-top, and now, stretching itself along the valley; at one time, covered with flowers; at another time, planted with prickly brier and the grieving thorn. At some parts, intersected by cross-ways, he might be at a loss to

distinguish the highway from the roads, which appeared to stretch themselves in the same direction. This is still strikingly descriptive of the situation of the Christian, on his journey to the Heavenly Canaan. The road of holiness which he pursues does not always present to him an equal surface. When his faith is in lively exercise, he travels through a rich level country, where all is easy, light and pleasant. When faith maintains its vigour, and is regular in drawing its supplies from the fulness of Christ, the traveller ascends the steep of difficult duty with a firm step, and paces the roughest parts of the way of holiness, without complaining of extraordinary fatigue. The keen and piercing eye of faith distinguishes every cross-way, and marks the direction of the right way from those which appear to stretch in the same direction. When this is the case, the varieties in the way of holiness give the traveller no uneasiness. But this will not always be his attainment. When the faith of the traveller becomes weak, then hope's wing flags; fear sets upon the traveller like an "armed man," and the clouds of jealousy and doubt overshadow him, and darken for a while both his comforts and his prospects. Then he travels tardily, draggingly, and heavily; it is emphatically up-hill work: duty becomes painful and distressing; the road rough and perilous; the promises planted by the way-side lose their beauty; every prickly briar gives pain, and the scratch of every thorn is ready to exhaust his patience. The by-paths seem to promise him some relief, and the ways which lie in the direction of the road of holiness, begin to engage his attention. This, the traveller may expect, but let him not despond; let him still go forward;

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the roads will mend; the prospects will brighten in God's time. Meanwhile the promise shall be fulfilled: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and, as thy days, so shall thy strength be." If, Christian travellers, your strength fail in the journey, sit down; but let it be by the way-side. Wait, but let it be by Jacob's well; rest for a season, but let it be upon your knees, and the Hearer of Prayer will send you relief. When poor Hagar, overwhelmed with distress of mind, and quite exhausted with fatigue of body, threw herself upon the ground, unable to advance a step farther, an angel from the throne of God was sent to direct her to a fountain she did not perceive. To the weary traveller on the way of holiness, God will give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

4th.—The Christian traveller may expect annoyance and trouble from his fellow travellers. Man is a rational creature, and fond of society. The fatigue of travelling is often very much lightened by the enjoyment of company, while at other times, the road is rendered extremely unpleasant by the ill-humor, the disagreeable manners, and the untoward behaviour of travelling companions. This is still strikingly descriptive of the situation of the traveller to the Heavenly Canaan. Though all the travellers on the journey towards heaven, are born from above, belong to the same family, and will reach the same blessed country, yet the travellers will never bear an exact resemblance to one another, until they perfectly resemble Christ in glory. If, on this heavenly route you will not find one traveller whose countenance bears a perfect resemblance to his com-

panion's, so you will not find two travellers who think entirely alike on all matters. If the features of the face in the travellers to heaven vary, so will the features of the mind. But this is often a source of much uneasiness and trouble. It generates feuds, contentions and animosities among the travellers. It interrupts their peace, and breaks up their fellowship; arms them against one another, and provokes conflicts which dishonor their profession, and render their journey extremely unpleasant. Such travellers, professedly on the holy and heavenly way, which should always be the way of peace, are associated with a class of the most painful facts. They supply materials for the very mirth and merriment of the men of the world; and cause the way of the Lord to be evil spoken of. They frequently prevent others for a season from joining the society of the religious, and divert for a while, from the strait way, some who had entered upon the journey to heaven. These things give the meek, humble traveller, who has learned the lesson of Christian charity, much uneasiness, and great trouble of mind. But, let the liberal Christian traveller solace his mind, amidst such annoyance from his companions. While there is only one way to the third and highest heaven, by an interest in Christ, and a walking in His footsteps on the holy way, yet, although the way which leads to life is said to be narrow, it is broad enough to admit persons of divided judgment in some things. Shall we be so weak, or so malicious, as to suppose that a professing brother is not in the way to everlasting happiness, only because he does not walk arm in arm with us, and tread in our particular path? Let travellers, then, to the heavenly

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Canaan bear in mind Joseph's advice to his brethren: "See that ye fall not out by the way;" "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

5th.—The traveller may expect the attacks of enemies. When the traveller's road is through a desert, or through regions of dark forests, he is exposed to the spring of the panther or the tiger, the fury of the wolf, the attack of the bear and the sting of the serpent. When his road stretches through a cultivated country, yet is he exposed to the attack of the robber, and the malice of his fellowmen, more savage than the wild beasts of the field. This is still strikingly descriptive of the situation of the traveller to the Heavenly Canaan. Holiness the only road to heaven, was completely deserted by men when they apostatized from God. Then our world became a province of hell, and the way to heaven was broken up. The road of holiness was cast up *anew* by the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ unto the death, and is distinctly marked by the traces of His own feet; but it still stretches through an enemy's country, although divided from the common on which the great mass of mankind are spread. "The Canaanite is still in the land," employed by the prince of darkness, or his agents, in his work of mischief and desolation. This arch-deceiver, although stript of his usurped authority, and utterly vanquished by the Prince of Peace—the traveller's Lord—has still permission to exert his cunning and display his malice. Expert in the dark arts of deception, and profoundly skilled in the formation of plans of mischief, the malice of his heart is unceasingly employed to disturb the

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peace and to mar the enjoyments of those travellers to Zion whom he has no power to destroy. In the emphatic language of the Bible, this tremendous foe, "like a roaring lion," not only with his emissaries scours the wilderness over which his own subjects are spread, but he frequents the skirts of the way of holiness, with a malignant purpose to harass the traveller by his awful roarings. He at one time attempts to startle and alarm the travellers, that by exciting their fears he may prevent their progress. At other times he employs fascinating lures, that by an imposing display of the pleasures and enjoyments of sin he may seduce them from the consecrated path. When such devices do not succeed, he employs his agents to persuade saints that the way on which they travel is narrow, and removed from the pleasures and enjoyments of life; that the laws of their Sovereign impose upon them abridgements of liberty that are unendurable, and demand sacrifices and self-denials from which others are happily exempted; that their minds are perpetually disquieted with fears and apprehensions which neutralize all enjoyments; and that they are exposed to dangers and enemies whose very semblance and encounter they ought to shun. But this is not all. While the roarings of the lion are calculated to excite the fears of the travellers, and fill their souls with dismay, the lures employed by his agents correspond with the remaining corruptions of their hearts, and expose the travellers to imminent danger. By these stratagems the enemy of souls too often succeeds in weakening the faith of the travellers; in blunting their relish for divine enjoyments; exciting the carnal desires and appe-

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tites of the heart, and even in tempting them to partial backsliding. Such is the view of the Christian life which every traveller to Zion must take. We find an apostle asserting: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places." Oh, then, let all travellers to the heavenly country "put on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Let us now proceed to the *third* enquiry—What the saint needs for his encouragement to proceed on his journey. On this department of the subject, let it suffice that we call your attention to the *three* following particulars: He needs a Guide—a Protector—accommodation.

1st.—He needs a guide. A traveller would be guilty of folly and criminal neglect, if he did not, before the commencement of his journey, make himself acquainted with the customs and the manners of the country he designs to visit; with the way that leads to it, and seek every assistance that he could procure to prevent mistakes and maintain his peace by the way. In this respect the Christian traveller enjoys peculiar advantages. In the Scriptures he is furnished with a description of the glory of the country to which he is travelling, and the dignity and enjoyments of the inhabitants. In the Scriptures he is furnished with a map of the country, through which he must pass to the heavenly Canaan, in which the road of holiness is distinctly marked: when it lies over the mountains of painful duty; when it stretches through the valley of en-

joyment; when it crosses the waters of affliction, or winds through the wilderness of difficulties; and when it leads the traveller through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and Jordan's turbid stream. In the country through which the traveller passes, the road of holiness is not only thrown up, but all the varieties of the road are marked by the footsteps of the Redeemer; and directions and promises are left for the traveller on the side-posts which the Redeemer erected for the advantage of His followers. Nor is this all; for the comfort and encouragement of the traveller, the Holy Spirit is promised for his Guide and Comforter. The Holy Spirit who is possessed of infinite perfections, is divinely qualified for this important office, and conducts the traveller "to the land of uprightness." By His enlightening influences, He instructs the traveller in his duty, and pours light upon his path. By His quickening influences He animates the traveller on his journey and encourages him to meet difficulties and dangers with fortitude. By His sanctifying influences, He renders the path of holiness pleasant and delightful, and closes His eyes upon enticements to iniquity, and shuts His ears against the seductions of the wicked, and the temptations of the Prince of Darkness. In the hour of perplexity and distress, when the heart of the traveller faints from the difficulties that present themselves, and from his ignorance of what is duty, this faithful Comforter and Guide proclaims behind him: "This is the way, walk ye in it." If to these we add the instruction of the ministers of the Gospel, and the mutual encouragements and exhortations of his trusty companions, we must verily admit that the traveller to

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the Heavenly Canaan, enjoys advantages peculiar and distinguished.

Oh, how wonderfully and wisely are the means of salvation connected! The Word of God furnishes the traveller with directions and promises, and reveals the Spirit of God to explain and enforce them upon his mind and his heart, while the ministers of the Gospel and fellow Christians act in the most entire subserviency to both.

2nd.—He needs a protector. A protector is essentially necessary for the comfort and the safety of the traveller. Although the highway of holiness is consecrated ground on which there is "no lion nor any ravenous beast," but, on which the "redeemed of the Lord" alone, travel; yet the way of holiness is beset with robbers, who not only maltreat the traveller when he deviates from the right way, but frequently attack him even when he keeps upon consecrated ground. The roaring lion of the bottomless pit cherishes a deadly malice against the traveller, and his legions being skilled in the arts of deceit and war, never desert the skirts of the road; and embrace every opportunity to molest, to intimidate, and terrify the traveller, and, if possible, to accomplish his destruction. All these enemies are continually upon the alert, and being frequently joined with the "Canaanites," who inhabit the country through which the traveller passes, he is every moment exposed to danger, and needs a protector, whose power can defend him from the malice of his numerous and mighty foes. In this respect, likewise, the traveller to Zion, enjoys peculiar advantages. The self-existent and independent Jehovah, who numbers the hosts of heaven and earth, is the protector of the

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traveller; and, "under the shadow of His wings," his safety is secured, although surrounded by enemies on every hand, who wait for his halting and long for his destruction. In the ear of the traveller, "persecuted but not forsaken," his Protector exclaims: "Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." The poor traveller, although in the garb of a pilgrim and a stranger, is in fact a king and a priest in disguise, and is furnished with a defence that his enemies cannot penetrate, and with a guard of honor which marks the grandeur of his pedigree. His escort is truly invincible. The providence of his God is as a wall of fire around him, and His spirit and His grace reign within him. The faithfulness of his God is the girdle the traveller wears. Angels are sent to "minister to the heirs of salvation." The credentials of his spiritual aristocracy he carries in his hand, marked with the broad seal of the heavens. "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." The gates of hell, then, may assault the tra-

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veller, but they "shall not prevail." They may strive to stop the traveller on his way to Canaan; but his God, who disposed him to begin his journey, shall be his Protector to the end.

3rd.—He needs accommodation. It is impossible for the traveller to proceed on his journey without accommodation and frequent supplies of food. Without them the heart of the traveller will become languid, and the most Herculean faint by the way. This is still strikingly descriptive of the situation of the traveller on his journey to the Heavenly Canaan; but in this respect, also, he enjoys peculiar advantages. The King of Zion has furnished the road of holiness which leads to His kingdom with houses of rest and refreshment, into which the traveller may enter and renew his strength, and be fitted for the prosecution of his journey. The bounties of Divine Providence may be considered as the temporal accommodations prepared by love for the comfort and the support of the traveller's mortal part; and the ordinances of Divine appointment as the spiritual accommodations, designed to quicken, to strengthen, and to sustain the soul of the traveller on his way to heaven. These ordinances—secret prayer, searching the Scriptures—family worship—hearing the Gospel—encompassing the table of the Lord—the ordinary channels of precious communications—are indeed effectual, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, for the comfort and strength of the traveller. He can thus "go on his way rejoicing," and sing as he advances along the road, "The King hath brought me into His banqueting house." The traveller, on entering these places of consecrated rest and enjoyment, is frequently blessed with de-

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lightful manifestations of his Father's love, and lays up a stock of sweet experiences and consolations on which faith afterwards feeds, and which enliven and invigorate his soul during many days. These sweet experiences are frequently found to administer comfort to the traveller during the cold and the dark nights of desertion which he often passes on his way to Emmanuel's happy land, as the pot of manna reserved in the ark reminded Israel of the months and years that were passed, and remained as a token for good long after God had ceased to "rain" on His people, and to feed them with "angel's food." Nor is this all. The traveller has not only his table in the wilderness spread with the bounties of Providence, and his soul refreshed and strengthened by the consolations of religion in attending upon the ordinances of Divine appointment, but his Sovereign King sometimes softens the toils of his warfare, and sweetens the fatigues of his journey, by a discovery of the glory of the country to which he is travelling, and a taste of Canaan's grapes on his way to Canaan's land. When the traveller ascends the Mount of Communion, and faith looks through the telescope of Gospel promises and Gospel ordinances, then, like Moses on the top of Pisgah, he takes a survey of the good land, and "sees the King in His beauty, and the land that is afar off." Then hope trims her lamp, and love raises her song to the heavens! Then all is light, joy, and triumph! In the enjoyment of such exhilarating contemplations of glory, the traveller exclaims: "Oh, how amiable is even this distant prospect of Thy dwelling, O Lord of Hosts! When shall I drop this mortal body? When shall I arrive at the end of this desert

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that stretches itself before me, and take possession of the promised land, the heavenly inheritance? When shall I receive the end of my faith—the salvation of my soul? How long, O Lord, holy and true! Why tarry the wheels of Thy chariot? Turn, my beloved, and be Thou like a roe, or a young hart, on the mountains of Bether."

Has a regenerated sinner such seasons of peace, joy, and triumph, as these? Fear not then, Christian traveller, who thus longest to reach thy home. A few more sojournings, and you shall reach the Canaan above. Soon, O traveller, it shall be said to thee, "The Master is come and calleth for thee!" And is this death? Yes! Death to the Christian traveller is the command of his King to leave the wilderness of this world, to pass over Jordan, and to enter on the possession of the promised land.

Addressing impenitent sinners briefly, we would say: To you the path of holiness, on which all who reach heaven travel, possesses no charms. It is considered a narrow, a dark, and a cheerless road. You consider the persons who frequent it strangers to pleasure, and unacquainted with enjoyment. You consider their society gloomy and morose, and their toils and their hardships utterly insupportable. But you are grossly mistaken. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is on the road of holiness alone that the Sun of Righteousness shines, and the influences of the Holy Spirit descend. Darkness, thick darkness, broods over all the paths of iniquity. Over your heads, oh sinners, the clouds of Divine indignation

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ever hang, and are prevented from bursting by the patience of that God whom you hate and despise. Over your heads the lightnings of Divine vengeance are collected, and flash in every disease with which you are visited, and in every trouble to which you are subjected. These, like the distant thunder, may not alarm you, but if you persist in the prosecution of iniquity's paths, the cloud will burst and overwhelm you with everlasting destruction. You are natives of Sinai, and placed by the mountain that smokes with the fire of the Divine indignation. It is infatuation and madness alone that influences you for one moment to remain on such dangerous ground ! Shall the thunder roll and peal in your ears, shall the lightnings flash, shall the sound of the trumpet wax louder and louder, and will you not listen to the voice of mercy ! Now your God proclaims, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their way and live ; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ;" "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come ; and let him that heareth say, Come ; and let him that is athirst come ; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Amen and amen.

VI.

SELF-SACRIFICE AN ESSENTIAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

"No, rather let me freely yield
What most I prize to Thee:
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold, from me.

"Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God, of that which doth cost me nothing."—2 SAMUEL, xxiv. 24.

THE whole history of the children of Israel, affords a striking manifestation of the special and overruling Providence of Almighty God, and of His power to control the mightiest efforts of man. The form of their government was unlike that of any other nation which had ever existed on the earth. It has been justly called a Theocracy, because the Almighty Himself assumed the administration of it, and from Him the people received their constitution and their laws. He supported and enforced His authority over them by conferring temporal rewards, and by inflicting temporal punishments. He even directed them in the intercourse which they maintained with foreign states; and when, in the preservation of their just rights, or to obtain possession of promised temporal blessings, the Israelites marched forth to encounter the shock of battle, it was under the banner of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. It was through the power of Jehovah that they so frequently triumphed over their enemies; it was His assistance which crowned with success the arms of Moses, of Joshua, of David, and of other warriors of

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Israel. The favour of the Almighty was displayed towards David at a very early period of his life, and in a very extraordinary manner. By it, he was raised through innumerable obstacles and difficulties (insurmountable by mere human power) from the lowly condition of a shepherd, to the splendor and glory of royalty. The Almighty crowned his arms with success, and it was only when he forgot his dependence upon God, and fell into sin, that He subjected him to reverses, and sent upon him severe afflictions, both personal and national. David, though a favored prince, was sometimes unmindful of his duty as a man, and as a servant of the Most High. It was not, therefore, his steady obedience to the law of God (for in fact, he committed some heinous sins) that procured for him, at times, so much of the Divine favour, but his deep humiliation of spirit, his heart-felt grief when he had offended God, and that instant reformation of life, which were the happy fruits of his sufferings. His noble Psalms, handed down in the sacred volume to the latest ages, will remain as imperishable monuments of the sincerity of his repentance, of the warmth of his affection toward God, and of the genuine fervor of his devotion; and by them, the flame of piety will be kindled and supported in the hearts of Christians during every period of the Church. As a warrior, we find that during his greatest success, he was generally sensible that it was to the Almighty he owed his triumphs, and the continuance of his prosperity; and, in many a hymn of gratitude, he ascribes to Him all the glory of conquest. We give the following as a sample out of many: "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, the God of my rock,

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in Him will I trust. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my high tower and my refuge, my Saviour; Thou savest me from violence. I will call on the Lord who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from mine enemies. Thou has also given me the shield of Thy salvation, and Thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me so that my feet did not slip. I have pursued mine enemies and destroyed them, and turned not again until I had consumed them; and I have consumed and wounded them that they could not arise; yea, they are fallen under my feet, for Thou hast girded me with strength to battle: those that rose up against me hast Thou subdued under me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies that I might destroy them that hate me." In this way, King David ascribed his safety and the glory of his victories to the great God of heaven and earth; but in the chapter from which the text is taken, we are informed that upon one occasion, he forgot for an instant that his power depended upon Jehovah alone. Continued success had made him confident; and in order to assure himself of the magnitude of his own resources, he gave orders in an evil hour that the people of Israel should be numbered. Such an act on the part of David, who had hitherto so well known that he owed all his success to the protection of the Almighty, and had ascribed it to Him accordingly, was a proof of his confidence in the arm of flesh, and shewed that for the time he trusted in his own strength, and was unmindful of God. It was no sooner performed, however, than he was aware of the sin which he had committed, and repented of it profoundly and

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intensely. "And David's heart smote him," says the sacred writer, "after that he had numbered the people; and David said unto the Lord, 'I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech Thee, oh Lord, take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.'" But when mankind transgress the laws of God, they soon feel the bitter consequences of disobedience; and though by sincere repentance they may again be reconciled to their heavenly Father, their iniquities carry along with them in the first place a portion of sorrow and suffering. Thus it happened to David, who was quickly informed that a severe national calamity would be sent by the Almighty as the punishment of his sin. The Lord visited the land of Israel with a grievous pestilence, and "there died of the people seventy thousand men." When, through the goodness of God, the pestilence was about to be removed, David was ordered to "go up and rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite." In obedience to the Divine command, David went up; and when Araunah saw the king and his servants coming towards him, he came out, "and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground." When in answer to Araunah, who had requested with the greatest possible modesty and deference to be informed of the reason of his being honored with a visit, David replied that he was come to purchase his threshing-floor, in order to erect on it an altar unto the Lord, Araunah freely offered it to him without price, and oxen also, and other gifts necessary to the performance of what was required. It was then that David said to Araunah, "Nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at

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a price ; neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God, of that which doth cost me nothing." It is evident that the price of the threshing-floor, and of all that was necessary to constitute his offering unto the Lord, could not be a matter of great consideration to the King of Israel ; and, therefore, it is not to the worth or extent of the service done to God, when he paid for them instead of accepting them as a gift, that we mean to direct your attention, but it is the sentiment embodied in the words that is worthy of your approbation ; and it involves a principle which, when properly explained and illustrated, will be found to be peculiarly deserving of the regard of every Christian, and a principle which, we fear, is too seldom kept in view. All that can be inferred from this act of David's is, that he did not consider the service of the Almighty of such a nature as that it could be rightly performed without some sacrifice on the part of His creatures ; and from it we shall take occasion to expose and condemn the practice of those Christians who appear to entertain a very different view of the obligations imposed upon them. Oh ! it seems to be a maxim with many that they should yield obedience to the commands of God to such a degree only as may be compatible with their own peculiar views of ease and convenience, or of approbation, which in their opinion may be due to them. Instead of fairly interpreting the Word of God, they explain its injunctions in such a way as to make them correspond with their own wishes. Instead of searching for the standard of duty in the Holy Scriptures, where alone it is to be found, they raise a false one of their own, founded upon views which are erroneous—sometimes by reason of ignor-

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ance, but much more frequently from design and wilful misconception.

We shall now give the following illustrations of these remarks :—

First.—There are some who wish to be religious, but not more so than is consistent with the love of the world. These form a very numerous class of mankind, who, without being positively infidels, are nevertheless, strangers to the feelings and sentiments of true religion. Their hearts are bound up in the present world, but whether from the effects of education, from respect to long established custom, or from some indistinct idea of the utility of good morals, they are of opinion that it is their duty to give a small share of attention to religion. As to yielding themselves up to its guidance, as to making it the rule of their life, more especially when it interferences with the prosecution of any favorite worldly object, nothing could be farther from their thoughts and desires. Their creed is, that as man has a most important part to act in society, which requires him to engage in the pursuit of the business, and the pleasures of the world, the duties of religion ought on no account to interfere with it, or, if they do, that they must not be regarded. They know well, indeed, that “no man can serve two masters ;” they are aware that they cannot love the Saviour and the world with equal affection, but, when the duties required by both come into competition, they are never at any loss how to act ; they quickly dispose of religion as a secondary concern, and give their hearts to the world. When religion appeals to them at a time when they are not under the influence of any strong present temptation, like Agrippa they are

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almost persuaded to be Christians; but whenever it seems to interpose any obstacle to the pursuit of a favorite worldly object, like the young man who came to Jesus for instruction, but would not act upon it, they go away sorrowful, because they have great possessions. When men's religion extends no farther than this, how unworthy is it of the name. Faith in Christ is an energetic, active, mighty principle, pervading the heart, and bringing the thoughts and actions under the dominion of the law of God. Our Saviour requires that we should make the discharge of religious duties the paramount object of life, and consider the business and pleasures of the world as subordinate, for He says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." But, is not the practice of many, almost of all, in direct opposition to this precept of our Lord? Do they not give their hearts to the world, and a cold, a languid, and oft interrupted attention to the important interests of their deathless souls? Whatever they may pretend, therefore, their religion is not the religion of the Gospel; it is not a warm, animating, subliming principle, elevating the thoughts and regulating the actions; it is the creature of their own imagination, a listless and unmeaning formality, without vitality, cordiality, substance. The Gospel assures them that the present world is a state of trial, during which they must obtain the possession of those graces which will qualify them for heaven, and not a place to which they are sent for the mere enjoyment of present pleasure. But are they, in any great or sensible degree, influenced by this representation? Does it moderate their love of a transitory state of existence? Does

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it make them abandon any one object of earthly delight, or renounce the eager pursuit of worldly pleasure? No! They make not a single sacrifice to the demands of the Gospel, and what therefore, can be said of their pretended regard for things sacred, which extends no farther than is consistent with an ardent attachment to the world, but that it is a trivial and contemptible service, and that, in the language of King David in the text, it is an "offering to the Lord their God, of that which doth cost them nothing."

Secondly.—There are some who wish to be religious, as far as they can be so without renouncing the enjoyment of their favorite sins. The description given in the Scriptures of human nature, as corrupted and sinful, is fully verified by the experience of mankind. Every individual has only to look into his own heart for a confirmation of it, and its truth is deeply and sadly attested in the blackest pages of the history of our race. While the scriptural doctrine, therefore, of the universal corruption of human nature, remains unquestioned and unquestionable, it may be added that there are peculiar and besetting sins which are characteristic of individuals. Though all are sinners, there are certain temptations which exert over every individual greater influence than others; and, in point of fact, every person experiences that it is by these he is most apt to be seduced from the path of duty. Those peculiar predispositions towards some sins do often constitute a great distinction among men, and form the most prominent shades of difference in their characters. They are frequently taken notice of in Scripture; and, while the necessity of

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forsaking all iniquity is pointed out, our attention is particularly directed to the duty of conquering and restraining the sin "which doth so easily beset us." It is in regard to the influence which this sin exercises that many so frequently deceive themselves. They are so ignorant as to believe, and so cunning as to attempt to make men believe also, that because they refrain from the commission of some sins which are fallen into by others, and because they perform some easy duties in which perhaps they find a sufficient present reward for all the sacrifice they have cost them, they are truly religious persons, while at the same time they are giving full and unlimited indulgence to their ruling appetites and passions. But it is highly necessary that such hypocrites (for they are nothing else) should be stripped of their pretended merits, and that the secret wickedness of their hearts should be laid open. Human nature, though fearfully depraved, is not so totally diabolical as that every wicked passion rages in the heart with uncontrolled fury. There are sins to which some men feel little inclination to yield, and yet these are often the very sins by which others are most apt to be seduced. One man is the slave of sense—another, of avarice, and a third of ambition. Some are actuated by envy, some by resentment, some by pride, and some by the other wicked passions of man; but there is no one who is governed by them all with equal degrees of violence. Where, then, is there ground of boasting to any individual who yields not to one or more sins to which he feels little or no inclination, but who gives himself up without restraint to the full indulgence of his favorite iniquities? The sensualist may be a person not

easily moved to anger, nor swayed by ambition ; but what is there deserving of the name of virtue in avoiding these excesses to which he is not constitutionally disposed, while his heart is notwithstanding corrupt and unclean ; while he is led captive by the sins of the flesh, and instead of exerting his powers to escape from these, hugs his chains and binds them still closer around him ? The same observation applies to all other sinners who make a merit of resisting certain temptations, while they yield to those to which they are most inclined. Nothing can be more unfounded or ridiculous than the claim to be regarded as religious which is frequently set up by such persons. To his besetting sins the attention of every one who calls himself a Christian ought to be supremely directed ; and it is only when, through grace, he has been enabled to make a gradual and steady progress in subduing them, that he is entitled to that name. So long as they continue to lead him captive as their willing slave, and he is contented to exonerate himself from the duty which he owes to God by avoiding temptations to which he has no strong inclination, and by performing certain easy and trivial acts of obedience hourly, deceives his own heart, and attempts to do that which is impossible, viz. : to deceive his God by presenting to Him an offering of that " which doth cost him nothing."

Thirdly—Some would be religious as far as compliance with outward forms is concerned ; but they have no affecting or permanent sense of religion. It is the character of the true disciple of Jesus, that he serves his God and Redeemer from love. Anything like disinclination to his duty, or coldness in

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the discharge of it; any feeling which is indicative of the want of real cordiality and zeal in the service of Christ, is a manifest, radical, and decided defect in his character. But, if we take a view of the religion of a very great, nay of a vast proportion of those who bear the name of Christians, how different is it from that which the Gospel delineates! Is it a warm principle of love to God, and gratitude to Christ, seated in the heart; over-ruling every wicked thought that raises itself in opposition to the will of the Almighty, and regulating the life according to the Divine law? Does it consist even in a habitual conviction of the superintending Providence of God, and of the necessity of governing our actions, with a due regard to His glory? No, it amounts only to this indefinite and indistinct idea, that the duties of religion cannot be altogether neglected without danger, and that men cannot safely indulge themselves in the practice of every sin. With many, we apprehend, the principle of religion is still less extensive, and consists of little more than an attention to those forms which a regard to decency, and the opinion of the world, and even the maxims of selfishness enjoin. They know that religion has great influence in checking crimes, and in keeping together the bonds of civil society. In lending to it, therefore, their countenance and sanction, so far as a compliance with forms and ordinances is concerned, they are aware that they contribute to their own security and safety, which are closely and intimately connected with the maintenance of good order in the state. This explanation will account for the apparent zeal of many worldly men; they know (to use their own language and in their own sense) that religion is a good thing—

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good, that is to say, for preserving the temporal prosperity and interest of man. Notwithstanding their scrupulous compliance with its forms, their hearts are often entirely unaffected by the truths of religion, and they remain inextinguishable to all those feelings of ardent love and attachment, which are due to God, and to the Saviour of men. They affect an outward decency and propriety, but these only conceal the worldliness and sensuality of their hearts. They may shew a respect for the ordinances of religion by frequenting the house of God ; it is not, however, because they delight in His service, but because they believe that their example may be useful to those whose outrages against the laws of their country would be dreaded by them, unless their wickedness were counteracted by a certain sense of moral and religious duty. But what is this show of respect for the forms of religion ? Does it constitute it a reasonable service on the part of man, or a suitable tribute of love and affection to God ? No ; it may exist when the soul is devoted to the pleasures of sin and of the world, and is therefore, upon the part of those who present it, an offering unto the Lord "of that which doth cost them nothing."

Fourthly.—Some men who devote themselves to the world and its pleasures during youth and middle age, would be religious in their latter years and at the close of life. It is in youth that the mind enters with the greatest eagerness, upon the pursuit of every object, which can excite the admiration or engage the affections of man. At that time the world is comparatively unknown. Man is not disposed to take his information from the report of wisdom and accumulated reflection. He has not yet been able to

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form a decision from experience, and draws, consequently, upon the rich stores of imagination, which adorn and bespangle with ten thousand beautiful colours, the whole tenor and phase of his existence. In this way, he raises to himself a world of fancy, which he fills with beings and pleasures of his own creation, but which are all doomed to vanish in rapid succession before the unerring light of wisdom and experience. Youth is not only the season during which the wanderings of a luxuriant imagination are freely indulged; but it is the time when the mind feels the greatest relish for worldly pleasures; when it is exposed to by far the least share of worldly afflictions, and when these make the slightest and least sensible impression. It follows, from all this, that it is the season when all the pleasures of the world will be pursued with the greatest ardor, and when all the means of enjoyment will be enlarged and multiplied. As yet the health and vigor of the body remain unimpaired; the senses are not blunted by long-continued gratification; reverses and disappointments have not clouded the bright prospects of happiness; conviction of the vanity of the world has not reached the mind; and men's thoughts have not been seriously directed towards the time when dust must return to dust. Mankind are seldom, therefore, so deeply and seriously impressed with the great and solemn truths of religion during the time of youth as they ought to be. The tide of passion runs too strong and impetuous to be checked by those restraints which the Gospel imposes. "What," says the youthful devotee to the world, "shall I shut myself up from the enjoyment of pleasure when it is most deserving of my pursuit?"

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Shall I deny myself the gratifications of sense, or stop short in the career of ambition, of gain, of renown, at the very time when all my powers for obtaining every object which is most desirable are in their highest vigor, and when they shall speedily be enfeebled by the approach of age and infirmities? No; the present is the season best fitted for enjoyment; the present only is my own." The man of middle age, with his passions cooled, but not subdued, by time—with desires not satisfied, but transferred, perhaps, from objects merely sensual to others which, though different, are equally at variance with the spirit of the Gospel—still continues to employ a similar train of reasoning as an excuse for his perseverance in the pursuit of earthly pleasures and advantages, and for refusing to set his affections upon things which are above. "Shall I relax my diligence and ardor in the prosecution of my wordly interests at the very time when they are so necessary in order to secure a suitable provision for myself against the season of old age, and for the maintenance and comfort of those who are to come behind? The present is the time when my whole strength and vigor must be bestowed upon the world. When the season of activity is at an end; when infirmities approach; and when the progress of years, gliding silently along, shall at length warn me that I must speedily depart from the earth, then will I think of my God, then will I earnestly strive to be reconciled unto Him through Christ." But, alas! the period of retirement from the active duties, and from the cares and anxieties of the world, never arrives. It is postponed by many from one time to another, until at

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last they cease to think of it. Calculating always that a season of greater leisure, and better adapted for abstraction from the world, shall arrive, they delay reformation as long as they imagine it can be safely deferred; but, as they "know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh," they continue to procrastinate in this way till death approaches, and thus the season of repentance, if it arrive at all, is confined to the last anxious moments of existence. What, then, are we seriously to think of the conduct of those men who devote themselves to the pleasures of the world during the whole season of youth, of health and activity, and who resolve to turn unto God only at the last? What is this but expending their vigor and energy upon the world, and bestowing the infirmities and the weakness of age upon God? What is this, but a reversing of the Scripture rule, by loving the world "with all their heart, and soul, and strength, and mind," instead of the Lord their God? What is this, but the draining of the cup of pleasure to the dregs? What is this, but approaching unto God when they can no longer have enjoyment in sin? What is it, but an offering unto the Lord "of that which doth cost them nothing?"

It would appear, then, my brethren, that there are many who deceive themselves as to the duties of religion, and as to the extent of that service which is required of them by the Almighty. They imagine that little exertion and labor are necessary on the part of man to enable him to acquire those ornaments and graces of the Christian which qualify him for the kingdom of God; but a more enlightened view of the declarations of the Scriptures will

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convince them of their error, and shew them that it cannot be by such trivial and unimportant services as those which we have taken notice of in this discourse, that they can prove the sincerity of their obedience to God, or their love of Christ. It is indeed to be conceded, in the first instance, that when men have once, with the aid of Divine grace, obtained a victory over their darling sins, and have brought them into captivity unto the law of Christ; and when, by the same means, they have been enabled to make progress in the virtues of the spiritual life, the difficulty of their task is in a great measure surmounted, and they have the satisfaction of feeling that the yoke of Christ is easy and His burden light. But this conviction is only obtained after victory is gained—certainly not at the time when they are struggling with all the unsubdued power of their spiritual enemies and of their unrenewed and unsanctified nature. While they are yet in their sins, and live at enmity with God, they may be assured that they have many laborious efforts to make, many painful sacrifices to submit to, and many a severe conflict to sustain with their carnal natures, before they walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. When we are informed by our Saviour that though the duty of forsaking our darling sins should be like cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye, we must nevertheless perform it, we cannot doubt that the task which we have to accomplish is a difficult one. The same thing may be justly concluded from these words of our Lord: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me;" "Enter ye in at the straight gate: for

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wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." The truth is, the Christian has to offer up on the altar of faith, not the costly sacrifices of the Jewish law—not those by which ignorant and idolatrous Pagans sought to appease the wrath of their false gods—but the "living sacrifice" of the "old man," or body of sin. It must be mortified, or put to death, which Scriptural expressions being figurative, do intimate that the appetites and passions of our corrupted nature must be subdued, and be so completely brought under subjection to the law of Christ that they shall no more be able to hold us in bondage to sin. The accomplishment of such a task by the Christian is a work of which it cannot be said, as of the others which we have described, that it "doth cost him nothing." Difficult, however, as it may appear to those who have not deeply reflected upon the promised aids of the Gospel, it is not an impossible or even a hard service to those who are enlightened and strengthened by the Spirit of God. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Amen and Amen.

VII.

DUTY AND MEANS OF RECONCILIATION TO GOD.

“Will ye not His grace receive?
Will ye still refuse to live?
Why, ye long sought sinners, why
Will ye grieve your God, and die?”

“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.”—2 COR. v. 20.

THE approach of the ambassador of a sovereign prince, in the midst of a province that has risen up in rebellion, always excites a degree at least of temporary interest. What are the powers with which he is invested; what are the terms he has to offer; what will be the result of his embassy? These are enquiries that check for a time the operations of the hostile, and awaken the curiosity of the indifferent, uniting all in a pause of attentive expectation.

If there was an embassy calculated to spread abroad a general and solemn interest, it is that of which we read in the passage, from which our text is taken. The apostle presents himself not as the representative of any earthly power; he comes with the ensigns of the Sovereign of the universe, of the King of kings; he comes to a world that lieth in wickedness, and that has recklessly thrown off its allegiance to its rightful Lord; he comes clothed in the delegated authority of omnipotence itself; what he announces has the validity and force of an utterance of God, for it is in His name and by His authority; and, moreover, it is in Christ's stead.

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And for what end has the apostle received this high commission, and what is the message that he bears? Does he come for peace, or does he come for war amongst us? Is it to recall the offers of pardon that have so often been made, and so daringly disregarded? Is it to announce the final termination of all further truce, and is his voice to be the signal of a fiercer and never-ending hostility? No, my brethren, the ambassador of God who comes to speak in the stead of Christ, comes for peace and not for war. It is on an errand of mercy, on an embassy of reconciliation that he is sent; and the message which he bears from high heaven to earth is, "Be ye reconciled to God."

We are told that when our Lord first appeared to His disciples, after His resurrection from the dead, "they could not believe for joy." They dared not trust their own minds, by giving credit to what so far exceeded anything they had ventured to expect. A similar feeling might well arise in our minds upon first hearing those words that the apostle makes known to us. We might almost be led to suppose that there must be some error or mistake, and that it was impossible that an invitation, so inconceivably gracious on the part of God, could be intended for us. "Be ye reconciled." Who is it that is to be reconciled? The children of men have sinned against God, and are by nature in a state of enmity with Him. The difficulty, then, must surely be, not on the part of man, but of God. Is not the object to be attained the averting of His anger who has been offended? And, instead of our being exhorted to be reconciled to God, ought we not rather to be exhorted to devise some means by which we might

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propitiate the favor of Him whose wrath has been kindled against us? This view might seem more agreeable to the relation in which the Sovereign of the universe stands to our rebellious race. Is there not, then, any method by which the passage before us might be explained in such a way as to correspond with these ideas? No, my friends, the words of our text admit not of any interpretation different from their obvious import. The Apostle employed them in their plain and literal meaning, and the character which he bore, and the office to which he was set apart, and the powers with which he was invested, were all conferred upon him, that he might address himself to thoughtless and apostate and rebellious men. "Be ye reconciled to God." The apostles were in a peculiar sense the ambassadors of Christ. When our Saviour Himself was in the world, He pressed the treaty of reconciliation upon man; and when He left the earth the apostles were especially commissioned in His name and stead, to urge it still further. But, at the same time, all those whose office it is to set before mankind the truths of our religion, may be considered in an inferior sense the ambassadors of Christ. It is still the will of Christ, equally as when He gave a Divine commission to His apostles that men everywhere should be called to repent. The Gospel ministry is a ministry of reconciliation. The sum and substance of it is, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself not imputing unto men their trespasses." This is the great doctrine which ought above all others to be brought forward; or rather it is the doctrine which is comprehensive of every other Gospel truth; and immediately connected with it, and rising out of it,

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is the great exhortation, which, in like manner, is comprehensive of all other exhortations: "Be ye reconciled to God." So long as we are not acquainted with the fulness and the freeness of the grace of God, or do not make a practical use of our knowledge by returning to the Lord, we know nothing as we ought to know, and have our Christian course yet to begin. There are many subordinate points of knowledge and practice which are of high importance in relation to this world; but, unless they are blended with the doctrine of reconciliation, making it more clearly understood, or facilitating its application, they are utterly valueless in regard to the world to come. Seeing, then, the vast importance of these words, we trust you will give your serious attention while, in the sequel, we endeavour to explain what is implied in them, pressing home upon you the exhortation they contain. In the *first* place it is implied in the words of our text, that those who are addressed are in a state of enmity with God. Reconciliation pre-supposes difference, or variance, or enmity. There is more than mere indifference supposed; if that had been all we would have been exhorted to love, or to obey, or to follow after God. Unless there were hostility a reconciliation could not be necessary. We may be made acquainted with those whom we formerly did not know; we may be made to love those respecting whom we were formerly indifferent; but when we are said to be reconciled, this shows to a moral demonstration that there has been something more than ignorance or indifference; that there has been actual variance, positive enmity. Such, my brethren, is our state by nature. "The carnal mind is enmity

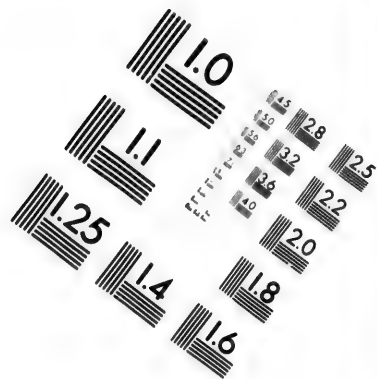
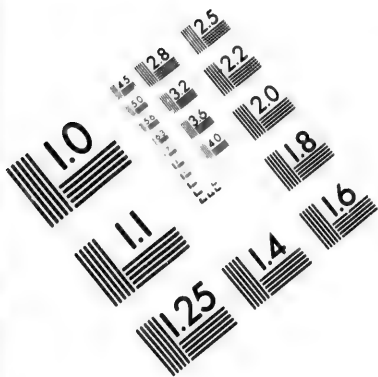
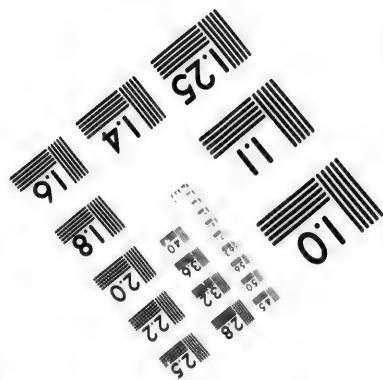
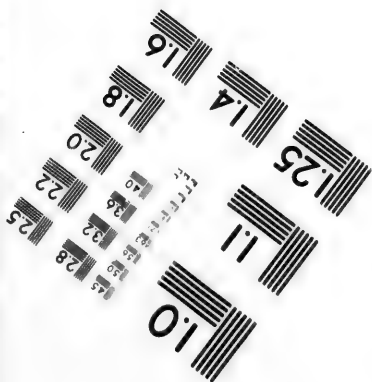
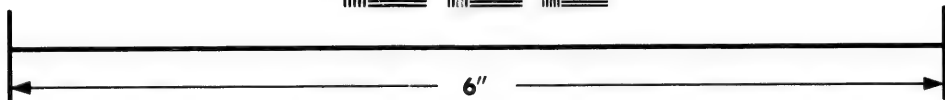
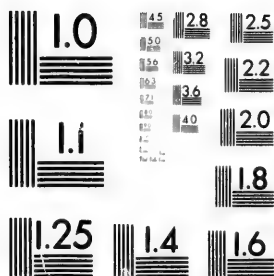


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against God." Both Jews and Gentiles are under sin. There is none righteous, no, not one; and all are by nature the children of wrath. Wherever there is a man who has not embraced the Gospel invitation, this is his condition: "I know you," said our Saviour, "that the love of God is not in you." There is no intermediate state between the friendship of God and the friendship of the world; and whosoever has not been reconciled to God is His enemy. Everywhere throughout the Scriptures mankind are represented as sinners. The whole scheme of redemption proceeds upon the doctrine of the corruption of our nature. The general offers of pardon prove a general depravity; and the same light that shows us the extent of Divine mercy, shows also the greatness of human wickedness.

From this view, a consideration of the most serious nature presents itself to you all. Have you embraced the offers of the Gospel? Have you received redemption through the blood of Christ? Have you been reconciled to God? If you have not, then there is no alternative, you must yet be strangers to Him, and enemies by your wicked works. There is none other name given among men, whereby we must be saved. No other ambassadors have come from heaven, but those who came in the name of the Lord; no other message has been brought from God to man, but that which the apostles delivered; and if you slight that message, or live unmindful of it, or build upon any views inconsistent with it, you are still to be numbered among the enemies of God. You may indeed shut your eyes to your real condition, or you may flatter your soul with deceitful hopes of tranquillity, say-

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ing "peace, peace, when there is no peace;" or you may quiet your conscience with resolutions of future amendment; but however you may deceive your own souls, God is not mocked; and, so long as you live in the neglect of the plan that, in His mercy, He has made known, you can only be viewed as aliens from Him. We would entreat you to make this the subject of your deliberate and serious reflection. It is painful to be living at enmity with a fellow-creature, what then must it be to be living at enmity with God? at enmity with Him to whom you owe everything, who has been so patient and long-suffering with you; who, if His wrath were once kindled but a little, would overwhelm you with everlasting destruction? When rightly considered, there is no idea more awful than that of a creature being at enmity with his Creator; it involves such aggravated guilt, such terrible danger. Would to God, my friends, that we could be enabled to say something that might make the inconsiderate, the guilty among you, alive to your condition. We are told of an aged ambassador of Christ, that whenever he saw a thoughtless man entering into the house of God, he asked himself, how shall I arrest his attention, how awaken him to serious thought? If such an object depends upon human ingenuity, it would indeed be hopeless. But the Word of God is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Word of God affords us abundant means for reaching the hearts of ungodly men; and if we use these means in dependence upon the Divine bless-

ing, there is a promise that they will not be used in vain. To arouse the inconsiderate and the wicked from their security, shall we come to them one by one, and hold up to them those parts of the Word of God, where they may see, as if reflected in a glass, an image of the hideous features of their iniquity? Shall we show you the darkness of your ingratitude to God? Shall we bring to light, one by one, the evil and polluted thoughts and desires that harbor in the dark folds of those hearts that are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Shall we recount to you the privileges you have abused, the opportunities you have neglected, the many years in which the husbandman has come seeking fruit and finding none? Shall we call to your recollection the many idle words you have spoken, the little good you have done to your fellow-creatures, the evil you have spread abroad by your influence and example? Shall we tell you of the hindrance that you have been to the cause of the Gospel, of the offences that have come by you, of the individuals still alive to whom your conduct has proved a temptation, or of the spirits that have gone to their place with the shade of their guilt darkened by your negligence, or example, or incitement? Or shall we set before you, the miseries of that sad eternity, which assuredly awaits the obstinately impenitent? These are all means that we are warranted and enjoined to employ. But there is one still more efficacious,—and amidst every endeavour to awaken the conscience and alarm the fears,—it must never be forgotten that the ministry of the Gospel is a ministry of reconciliation. It is to the impenitent and unbelieving and wicked, that the words of our text are

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addressed—and even to them, who have been guilty of one or all the sins we have mentioned ; such are the riches of the grace of God ; such the magnitude of the merits of Christ, that the message from heaven still is, “ Be ye reconciled to God.” The words before us, then, are addressed to those who are in a state of enmity with God ; and we now proceed to remark, in the *Second* place, that it is required by our text, that our enmity to God should be laid aside. Reconciliation implies the removal of disaffection or dislike, and the restoration of friendship. Dislike to any individual arises from dissatisfaction with his character or his conduct. For example, the enmity of a rebellious province against their sovereign prince, must arise, either from dislike to his personal character, or dissatisfaction with the government that he exercises over them. And thus, also, the enmity of the heart against God, must proceed from dislike to the character of the Most High, or from unwillingness to submit to His laws, or from a dissatisfaction with the ways of His Providence, or the offers of His grace. Now, in order to the restoration of our friendship with God, these causes of enmity must be removed ; and, as no change can be suffered to be made on the part of the Divine Nature, there must be a change in our sentiments respecting it. The character of the Supreme Being must be the object of our adoration. We must be disposed to conform to His laws ; we must submit to the dispensations of His Providence ; and we must not merely give our assent to the truth of the revelation of His grace, but joyfully embrace the offers it conveys. The terms upon which the Almighty will receive us are made known to us—

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and we must submit to them without supposing that we can be accepted upon others more agreeable to our own inclinations. So long as there is any doctrine which we are convinced is clearly revealed, and yet to which we refuse to give our assent ; so long as there is any duty which is positively enjoined, and which yet we will not endeavour to comply with ; so long as there is any part of the dealings of God in His Providence, that appears to us harsh or unreasonable, there cannot be a reconciliation between us and God. There may be a profession of reconciliation between man and man—nay, perhaps it may be real, while some points remain, respecting which they are not both agreed : for allowance may and must be made for human imperfection ; and each party may make some concessions, and both agree to stand aloof from those subjects where there is still a difference. But there can be nothing of this between man and God. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It is impossible that there can be, and He will not allow it to be supposed that there is any imperfection in His character or government. The enmity that has subsisted between man and Him, must be ascribed, not to anything unreasonable in His requirements or doings, but to our own evil nature. He will not make any relaxation of the strictness of His law, in accommodation to the imperfections of our characters. The very idea that between God and man there can be any concealments, or mutual concessions, or implied understanding of keeping away from points on which there might be a difference, is derogatory to the dignity of His character. The reconciliation must be entire and complete. And

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in order to this, there must be on our part an acknowledgment that the enmity between us had its origin in our own evil nature; and there must be a disposition to submit henceforward in everything to the will of God. Nay, farther, if there be a particular part in His Providence, at which we are prone to murmur, or of His law which we are prone to break, we must be brought to acknowledge in such particulars the justice of His doings, and the righteousness of His exactions; seeking for strength that we may submit and obey. If we refuse to do this, then it is obvious that we are preferring our own judgment and our own will to his. We admit of a usurped authority, viz.: that of our own inclinations, and therefore, whatever we may profess, or whatever we may believe our sentiments in reference to Him to be, we are in reality in a state of rebellion. The Almighty must rule—sovereign, supreme, alone. And, if we make any exception, or allow to any other authority a superior influence we cannot but, in effect, be considered as rebels to His cause. We may not have risen in open defiance; on the contrary, we may perhaps make professions of allegiance to Him; but we hold secret intercourse with a hostile power—we have admitted an enemy within the citadel—we are traitors in our hearts. It is to be feared that there are not a few who thus deceive themselves. They form their own notions of the Divine character; they receive the Commandments of the Almighty with such exceptions and limitations as leave them ample scope for the indulgence of their own inclinations; they believe in the exercise of a species of mercy, of which no mention is made in the revealed Word, and thus

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they conceive themselves to be at peace with God, while He is not at peace with them! There are certain representations of the character of the Most High that can scarcely be contemplated without exerting our natural sentiments of veneration; there are emotions of gratitude and adoration that may be called forth in viewing the works or words of God, or in attending upon His ordinances; and there are some who rest satisfied with these feelings, as if they constituted them the servants of God, while they are habitually indulging in sins that are palpably inconsistent with His will. But here, my brethren, is a woful delusion. In any form sin is the abominable thing the Almighty abhorreth. It is the source, and the only source of the enmity that subsists between Him and His creatures; and if we do not relinquish every sin we can have no fellowship with God. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Our text, then, implies that those to whom it is addressed are at present in a state of enmity with God; and it requires that that enmity, and all that leads to that enmity, should be laid aside forever, and ever, and ever.

We now proceed to remark in the *Third* and last place, that the words before us imply that pardon will be extended to every one who embraces the invitation and turns unto the Lord. This appears from the general form of the exhortation itself, "Be ye reconciled." It appears also from the argument with which in the following verse the apostle enforces his exhortation: "He hath made Him to be

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sin," that is a sin-offering, for us, "who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." An atonement has been made, all-sufficient for the sins of the whole world; and every individual to whom the Gospel is preached is invited, unconditionally, to partake of the blessings of the Saviour's redemption. There are no qualifications or restrictions: whosoever will, is invited to partake of the water of life freely, and whosoever cometh unto Christ He will in no wise cast out. Among men, when one individual has injured another, he must devise some method of making satisfaction for the evil he has done, and of appeasing the wrath of him whom he has wronged before there can be a reconciliation. Many are prone to suppose that there should be a similar procedure with our Creator; and, by their penitence, they hope to move Him to compassion, or, by their constancy of obedience, to establish a claim to His favour. But this is not the method that is made known in Scripture. The Almighty reveals Himself as waiting to be gracious, as not willing that any should perish, as ready to receive all that come to Him. Every obstacle on the part of the Most High towards the pardon of all those who are willing to be reconciled, has been removed. It was necessary, indeed, for maintaining the stability of the Divine Government that, before man should be forgiven, a satisfaction should be made to the justice of God. But it was in the infinite mercy of the Divine nature that the method of satisfaction had its origin, and the Almighty Himself delivered up His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. "He so loved the world that He gave His own Son, that whosoever

believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "And He made Him," is the remarkable expression of the apostle in the verse following our text, "He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." He appointed this method of satisfaction. He bestowed the gift by which satisfaction was made; and that gift was nothing less than His own Son. There is a double reconciliation spoken of in the passage of which our text forms a part. There is a reconciliation of God to us, by not imputing to us our trespasses. And the means by which this was effected was by making Christ a sin-offering for us. In consequence of His sufferings it became consistent with the equity of the Divine government not to impute their sins to any who should believe on the name of Jesus. But, even here, it is obvious that, as the means of reconciliation were of God's own appointment, they must have been preceded by his everlasting love in such a manner, that it led to their appointment. Even in this respect, then, our salvation is of grace: had it not been for the method mentioned in the concluding verse of this chapter, or for other equivalent means, the love of God could not have been exercised towards us in pardoning our iniquities, and a reconciliation between God and man would have been impossible. But now that the means have been employed, all are invited to avail themselves of them. Without enquiring into the secret purposes of the Almighty, or endeavouring to fathom the deep things of God, it may be safely said that there is a sufficient warrant in the very precept before us for even the chief of sinners, to put his trust in the Divine mercy. The chief difficulty, however, in prevailing upon men to

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avail themselves of the invitation of the Gospel, generally arises, not from any doubts respecting the possibility of their finding acceptance with God, but from erroneous notions respecting the terms upon which they may find acceptance. There are few subjects respecting which it is so difficult to satisfy the mind, as the perfect freeness of the offers of the Gospel. It is still supposed that ere we accept of them something is wanting on our own part, to entitle us to the blessings of salvation; or, if not to entitle us, at least to qualify us for receiving. But the whole tenor of the Scriptures—the doctrines revealed, the promises made, the exhortations urged, the arguments by which they are all supported and enforced, are contrary to such an idea. God bestows like a Sovereign, and nothing is admitted which could in any way interfere with the royal freeness of His beneficence. If we endeavor to establish any personal claim, we do dishonor to the inexhaustible riches of His mercy, and make *grace* no more *grace*. His gracious offers are unrestricted, and the only way by which we can fall short of them, is by our rejecting them altogether, or by refusing to receive them in that method of unstinted, unconfined, and godlike liberality with which they are tendered. On the part of heaven there is nothing wanting. Every avenue is open, every preparation is made, every facility is afforded, every encouragement is given. The wells of salvation are unsealed, we have only to draw water out of them and drink. The Sun of Righteousness is arisen; we have only to open our eyes to behold it. The gift is in our Father's hand; we have only to ask and we shall receive it. The way

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to our Father's house is opened up to us; we have only to seek and we shall find. The porter standeth at the gate; if we knock it shall be opened to us.

We have now, brethren, endeavored to explain what our message is, urging you to embrace our offer, and before we close we would ask every one of you what reception do you give to the treaty that we bear. We would trust that some of you may be able to say, that, long ere now you have accepted of the offers of mercy, and are enjoying peace with God. We would rejoice in the thought, that, few though they be, there are yet some among you whose iniquities are pardoned, whose transgressions are covered, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not their sins. "And we would exhort you to live as those who have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish or spot—for ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore, glorify God in your body and spirit which are His." But is this the condition of all of you, and are there not among you some who know not what it is to be at peace with God? To such, our exhortation is, "be ye reconciled." Are you in your hearts resolving to continue yet a little longer in sin, to delay the consideration of the offer that is made till a more convenient season; but my friends, from the importance of our message, and the majesty of the God from whom it comes, it grants you no delay, but tells you that procrastination here is at your peril. We read in ancient history, that an ambassador of the Roman power was sent to a hostile prince, and made known to him the terms upon which peace might be pro-

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cured by him. The warlike monarch demanded some time for the consideration of a matter so weighty. When this was refused he named a shorter period, which was also denied. He then asked that he might at least retire and consult with his chief chosen counsellors; upon which the ambassador took his rod and drawing a circle in the sand around the place where the monarch stood, declared, before you overstep this bound, peace or war must be your choice. To the same effect, but in a different spirit the apostle proclaims, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Amen and Amen.

VIII.

SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY DEPENDENT ON THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PRAYERS FOR THEIR PASTOR.

"Within Thy temple, when they stand
To teach the truth as taught by Thee,
Saviour, like stars in Thy right hand,
Let all Thy Church's pastors be."—CHURCH HYMN.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."—2 THESS., iii. 1.

WERE the arch-enemy of man again to appear, as he once did of old, in visible form, and were he to hatch a crafty stratagem to circumvent the objects of his hatred, and were he to spread out before their eyes a bait as tempting and seductive as that which imposed on the mother of all living, and were he by the insinuations of persuasive eloquence to assail the peace and the principles of mankind, would they profit by the history of the forbidden tree of Paradise, and so far borrow the serpent's subtlety as not to listen again to the voice of the charmer, though he should charm never so wisely? Perhaps there are many who, when they read the narrative of the primeval sin, and scrutinize the motives of the first human sinner, work themselves up to the conviction that had they been themselves the representatives of an unborn world of beings they would have stood true to God, and to themselves, and to posterity. Now, my friends, while it is sufficiently demonstrable that any person whatever of the human race would, if placed in the situation of his great progenitors,

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have fallen into the snare which captivated them, it is indisputably proved, in the case of all such confident and carnally secure individuals, that they would have at once displayed the easy and yielding principle of the betrayed and incautious woman; for what was it that lulled her conscience, and soothed her suspicion, but just her consciousness of complete self-control? What that gave the tempter his complete advantage, but just her undoubting assurance of superiority to danger? But, whether or not the posterity of Adam would follow the suggestions of the devil when they minister to selfish and agreeable desires, is a matter which unfortunately is not left to be determined by conjecture; for there now operates in the children of disobedience that same rebellious spirit which first polluted the purity of Eden, when, conversing with the woman, he vented the Satanic falsehood, "Ye shall not surely die." And, my brethren, the word of the serpent is still, as of old time, more fascinating and attractive than the voice of God. He has only to tempt the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, in order to lead captive a sinful and ungodly world. He has only to scatter temptations in the sinner's path, and men drink up iniquity like water. He has only to command, and his deluded slaves obey. In the language of our text, "*his word has free course.*" Now, contrast with this the Word of heavenly wisdom. "She crieth and putteth forth her voice. She standeth in the top of high places—by the way—in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates at the entering of the city—at the coming in at the door. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the

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sons of men. O, ye simple, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear, for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things—for my mouth shall speak truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing forward or perverse in them; they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

Now, this wisdom that in the right hand holds length of days, and in her left riches and honor; that guides in the ways of pleasantness and peace all who obey her Divine admonitions; this wisdom, regarding whom the heathen sage observed, that if she came down from heaven to earth mankind would be ravished into unconscious admiration of her beauty, is, when presented to human contemplation, so lightly and carelessly esteemed that the apostle, in our text, solicits the Macedonian church to importune the throne of Divine grace for the more general acceptance of the Divine message among men. "Brethren," says he, "pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."

Our present object is to refer to the introductory clause, "Pray for us," no farther than as it is needed to illustrate and enforce the expression which follows. Assuming, therefore, the propriety of the Christian brethren praying for the teacher, as being demonstrated by the Scriptural injunction to it, by

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the dangers and difficulties incident to the pastoral office, and by the positive advantage resulting from the exercise to all parties concerned, we shall confine our attention to the grand issue set before us in the close of the verse, and to the means and methods by which this issue may be most effectively attained.

The three following propositions will constitute the basis of our illustration of these points. 1st. The consummation of the Church's wishes is the triumph over all opposers of God's manifested grace. 2nd. The legitimate agency for effecting that consummation is the preaching of the Gospel. 3rd. The qualification of that agency for its object, is essentially and completely dependent on the co-operative agency of the prayers of the Christian people.

The first of these particulars, viz: that the consummation of the Church's wishes is the triumph of God's manifested grace over all impediments and hindrances, lies so obviously on the surface of the text that there can be no mistaking it. The intention of the apostle's recommendation, and of the believer's prayer is, "That the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." The Word of the Lord, using the term in its general sense, has not always been a word of welcome to man. Often has it been more appalling to the guilty conscience than heaven's loudest and most tremendous thunders. But the message of Gospel mercy, which is the last and best and brightest manifestation of the Divine will, is so incomparably and transcendently gracious, that any other revelation besides it has been shaded and eclipsed by reason of the glory of the word of life that so far excelleth. The Gospel of Jesus Christ,

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then, is pre-eminently the Word of the Lord, and the inspired penman in the passage before us, figures it as a strong man running a race, who, with the field of contest before him, and glory waiting at the goal to crown the conqueror, contends for the exalted prize as the one great object of pursuit. Now, the way in which the apostle describes the subject implies that, in his time, this victory had not been fully won, for he entreats his correspondents at Thessalonica to use means for its furtherance and completion. The Word of God has not even yet had free course, nor been wholly glorified. It has come down from heaven, attended as it was at its descent by heaven's own seraphic minstrelsy, and its burden was "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good-will to men;" but its reception was not in accordance either with its character or its desert. It was light shining in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. When God diffuses, in His providential mercy, the blessings of earthly enjoyment, they are received with gladdened and joyous hearts. The evil and the good hail with equal ardor the genial warmth of summer sunshine; and when the rain of heaven descends on the just and the unjust, there is no reluctance manifested to the welcoming of so seasonable and refreshing a supply. Nay, the more terrible visitations of Almighty power are viewed in the spirit of submissive resignation. Who ever thinks of chiding the thunder if at him it roar? Who ever thinks of arresting the whirlwind and bidding its wrath be still? In all these instances, the Divine will is executed by Divine omnipotence; and a trembling world has only to submit and obey. The will of God has free

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course and is glorified. But, in sending forth for the salvation of guilty sinners the message of heavenly mercy, that message which is the most cheering that ever came from heaven unto earth, God, for the larger display of His own glory, withholds the direct and immediate application of omnipotence, to make that message be received. He could, if he chose, send forth the compulsory rod of His strength out of Zion, and thus rule in the midst of His creatures. But He chooses rather that they be willing and voluntary subjects, when, in the day of His power, they are born in the beauties of holiness. And even the spontaneous allegiance of God's people can be rendered only in the day of His power—in the day when He looses the prisoners' bonds, and heals the sufferer's woes, and revives the sinner's heart. Yes, my brethren, the Word of God, immutable and everlasting though it be, might sound through all the earth and be proclaimed as widely as the world's remotest bounds; and yet, unless it had more to enforce its revelations than man's eye can see, it would never have free course nor be glorified. The sun, himself, when he shines in his bright effulgence, revives the dormant energies of vegetable life, and the grateful earth dedicates to Him all its verdancy and flowery beauty; but there are spots on the earth which seem consigned over to hopeless sterility, and which, embittered alike by sunshine and by shower, are marked with the desolation of a withering curse. In like manner, while pure ranks of beings rejoice in all God's manifestations, are bettered and blessed by all, the sinful children of men have privileges which of themselves, they do not and will not improve. They have the commandments of God, which are

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more desirable than gold, yet they do not desire them ; sweeter than honey, yet loathed and set at nought. The Word of the Lord, which, amongst all pure and holy intelligences, is no sooner heard than loved and obeyed, is, in the ear of man, an unwelcome sound. It tells of sin—and man is, by nature, unwilling to admit it. It tells of death—and man instinctively revolts at the approach of this grim and ghastly foe. It tells of the worm that dieth not—and man's innermost soul recoils at the consciousness of its own guilt. But it tells of higher things than these : It tells of a remedy for man's diseases, of an atonement for man's delinquencies, of a sanctification for man's defilements. It tells that man is infinitely unworthy—but it adds, that God's mercy is above the heavens, and His truth has reached unto the clouds. It tells that Divine love is willing to embrace, and adopt, and save, even the chief of sinners ; and it calls upon these sinners to believe the message thus brought nigh to them, and to receive Christ as all their salvation and all their desire. It holds out blessings which all need ; it offers everything that is necessary to rectify fallen human nature ; and the very fact of the mind embracing it, is just the process by which its salutary agency is applied, so that the diffusion of Christian truth, or, in other words, the triumph of the principles of the Gospel is just equivalent to the enlightening and enlivening of man. We inhale the noxious atmosphere of sin, for it is a part of our moral constitution, and the effect is—that we are overpowered by spiritual insensibility, weakness, and death. We are, by nature, dead in trespasses and sin. Now, the Word of the Lord is perfect, because it is adapted

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to regenerate the soul, to enlighten the eyes, and to rejoice the heart. In a word, it is the great counter-active remedy which recovers us from the bondage and the danger of spiritual death. It is the manifestation of Divine grace which has appeared unto us and unto all men, bringing salvation, and teaching us that we should "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God our Saviour, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to Himself as a peculiar people." Now, since the Word of the Lord, or His manifested grace, demands the complete mortification of all selfish and worldly lusts; it follows, that ere it can have free course and be glorified, it must encounter the opposition of everything that is vicious and unruly in the human heart, and make its way in spite of all the schemes of resistance devised by evil men. And this, my friends, is just the very reason why those whom God has called and blessed with an everlasting salvation, are so peculiarly anxious that the Word of the Lord should run very swiftly and have a free course, and a final, rapid, splendid triumph. The apostle in the passage before us, is perfectly satisfied with regard to the propriety of his request, when, in order to show its bearing, he proves that it would conduce to the progressive diffusion of the Word of God—to its diffusion, not merely as a record of the most splendid and lofty literature, but as an armistice and an amnesty to sinners; not merely as an abstract representation, but as a pervading agent, that operates a transformation in the soul; not merely as a

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formal message, but, as a message that would accomplish the end of its transmission, and be glorified in moulding to a life of holiness all those that should be kept in the faith of it unto eternal salvation. Converted sinners, therefore, desire to see grace glorified from the two-fold motive of sympathy for their brethren and love for their Saviour; sympathy for their brethren, because they commiserate those who, as destitute as they were themselves, have not obtained consolation through grace; and love for their Saviour, because it only accords with His will, and augments His glory, that sinners should come to a knowledge of the truth. Hence, the giving of an accelerated impulse to the diffusion of the Gospel, is what constitutes the character and the desire of real Christians; and, such being the case, we may derive from this circumstance a test that may be of use to us, in deciding the awfully momentous question of our vital and practical Christianity. All the real members of the church invisible eagerly desire that the Word of the Lord should go forth in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and that it should be glorified in the salvation of sinners. The Church does not, can not, will not rest till God make Mount Zion a name and a praise in all the earth; and she contends as strenuously for this blessing as did Jacob, when, in his arduous encounter with a more than mortal combatant, he achieved for himself and his seed forever, the appellation of Israel, because that, prince-like, he had power with God and men, and had prevailed. The Church knows that at one day, the Word of the Lord, going forth like the Apocalyptic horseman, conquering and to conquer, shall triumph over all opposition, and win

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for itself universal glory ; that, as the ocean waves sweep over their wonted bed and leave unvisited no *hidden cavern*, but explore all deep places, and beat with their ceaseless heavings earth's remotest shores, and, uncontrollable by human might, mock the impotence of man, and bid defiance to all created power ; so shall God's Word finally assume an energy which will scatter all opposition, and it shall diffuse its purifying influence through all God's spiritual creation ; and it shall have free, full, and irresistible course through every part ; "for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the channel of the sea." The glory of Christ shall be consummated then and not till then, when all the members of His spiritual body are quickened and revived ; and hence, all the members of this body participate in the same feelings. Therefore, every professor of the Gospel, who is careless and indifferent about the free course and glorification of the Word of the Lord, is a lifeless and corrupt member. He wants the spirit of life and the spirit of love. How can he love God whom he hath not seen, when his brethren who associate with him, and stand around him, are viewed with cold and unrelenting apathy ? The consummation of the wishes of God's people is, to see the ultimate and universal triumph of Divine grace ; and if, therefore, no corresponding wish animates our hearts, what is the inference, the legitimate and necessary inference, but that we are not called with a holy calling ? Let us, in the *Second* place, advert briefly to the second proposition couched in the text. It is, that the legitimate agency for effecting the consummation we have described, is the preaching of the Gospel.

Were this not the case there would have been no need for the apostle introducing himself to his brethren in this place. He might have bidden them pray for the success of the Gospel, for the out-pouring of the Spirit, and for the wider diffusion of spiritual privileges; but he does not do one of these things. He does not bid them in this place pray directly for one of these objects. He sets forth these objects as desirable, but intimates that the way to realize them is to pray for him. The assertion of the text, therefore, is not, "pray that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified," but, "pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified;" thus demonstrating that the efficiency of the Word is chiefly developed through the instrumentality of the preaching of the Gospel. God, my brethren, has appointed that this should be the case, and therefore, this order of things is not only sanctioned in His revealed Word, but exemplified in the history of the Church in all ages. The Divine Word is, in its own intrinsic nature, quick and powerful; sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and body, the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, such being the case, it is able, even when it is silently and secretly perused, to pierce the sinner's conscience to the very quick; for it is an emanation from the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit through its medium enters into the hearts of men; it takes fast hold of the convictions of him who reads it, and it arrests the worldly current of his thoughts, and, as abruptly as was the ardent persecutor interrupted, when, in footsteps of blood he was pressing

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forward to Damascus, so suddenly and irresistibly does the Divine Word operate on the sinner's mind. It forces its eternal truths on his reluctant view, and although he is fain to believe himself righteous, his clamorous conscience tells him he is as guilty as the Bible declares; though he is fain to believe that he can amend his heart, the Divine Law assures him unanswerably, that he cannot; and, in short, at every stronghold, where his carnal and corrupt heart leads him to take his stubborn stand, he is forced, by the omnipotence of truth, to give way; till at last, overpowered by a sense of guilt, and obliged unwillingly to abandon every refuge of lies, he is brought to prostrate himself before heaven with the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The inspired Word takes free course and is glorified in extorting from him, not merely the barren, speculative assent, but the cordial and profound conviction that its description of him is true. And in this manner is he led into the saving reception of all that inspiration has revealed. The energies of simple truth may thus, by the blessing of the Spirit of God, bring him who reads it to the fellowship of Christ's salvation. But God has Himself ordained, by a fiat which our earth shall never see revoked, that the public ministrations of the Gospel are the grand leading means, under His Spirit, for causing the message of the Gospel to have free course and be glorified. In that instrumentality are concentrated the powerful influences of heaven and of earth, and by that instrumentality, too, do they most frequently operate. On that famous Pentecost, which the annals of *time* and of *eternity* shall equally commemorate, the apostles conversed about the Gospel to

strangers from every nation under heaven ; but the people, although they admitted the fact of something extraordinary, both in the doctrines they heard and the gifts they saw, turned a deaf ear to the Gospel invitation ; they wondered, and were amazed, and tried to get quit of their astonishment by idle investigations and sneering cavils ; but, not one of them opened his heart to the reception of the truth ; and it was not till Peter had risen, and assailed the hearts of the Jewish multitude, and made the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, penetrate when employed in the warfare of the Gospel, into many a hardened and callous conscience—it was not till he had thus stood forth in the exercise of his public ministry, to herald and proclaim salvation through the blood of Christ crucified, that the Word of the Lord had free course, and burst over the barriers and impediments which lay in its path, and subdued the refractory principles of depraved nature, and shivered into ten thousand atoms the fair picture which the heart delineated of its own beauty, and sunk in all its evidencing power into the innermost recesses of the soul, and in place of self-willed, haughty, scoffing, sneering infidels, made them, in the spirit of humility and conviction, to exclaim, “ Men and brethren what shall we do ? ” But, my friends, the abstract consideration of the method in which God most signally communicates the blessings of His grace, is merely a point of abstract interest. The consideration of the method in which the Word of God obtains the freest course and the greatest glory, is, when viewed by itself, a matter of subordinate value. The grand, immediate, all engrossing inquiry is, whether, in our

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hearts the Word of the Lord has obtained free course, and whether it be glorified there. The preaching of the Gospel is the principal medium through which God grants the saving influences of heavenly grace. Now, has it, in our own case, been attended with these effects? We have seen that the realizing of these effects constitutes the great end of the Church's prayers. We have seen that the ministry of the Word is the blessed instrument employed for this purpose. Now, that agency we possess, but has it, in reference to us, effected the results for the sake of which it has been appointed? We profess to believe the Gospel, and to honour the inspired record where its principles are unfolded. We profess to reverence the ordinances which have the sanction of heaven, and to wait on them with Christian feeling and faith and fervour. We profess to say "Amen" to every public prayer as a token of our desire and of our assurance to be heard. But have we constantly in our minds a distinct view of the grand aim and object of the Christian ministry, as being intended to give free course and glory to the Divine Word? Do we come to the enjoyment of this ministry, with a full-formed and deep-rooted desire that the Word may have free course in us and be glorified in us? Do we, in this matter, seek to be fellow-workers with God, by striving after conformity to His revealed will; by striving to weed out of our hearts the roots of sinful principle, and to have the same mind in us that was also in Christ Jesus? Do we seek to believe the whole of the Divine testimony, even when it militates most decidedly against our prejudices and natural feelings, and are we willing to crucify every favourite desire,

every cherished lust, every impure motive? Are we willing on every occasion to bow to the authority of God, and to let conformity to His requirements regulate the whole frame of our inner man? Do our hearts never lift up a front of proud rebellion to the law of heaven? And under every dispensation, calamitous or prosperous, are we ready to breathe out the prayer of resignation, "Thy will be done?" If we love the Lord with all our souls; if we stir up our spirits within us always to bless His holy name; if we reckon the gift of His Son all our salvation and all our desire, if we determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified; if, in one word, we yield ourselves up to take what God gives us, to do what God commands us, to be what God wishes us, then His word has free course in us, and it washes and justifies and sanctifies us, through the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

In the *Third* and last place, the qualification for its purpose, of the preaching of the Gospel, is essentially and completely dependent on the co-operative agency of the prayers of the Church. This idea stands out broadly and pre-eminently on the face of the text, for the apostle speaks of the success of the message which he bore as being unattainable otherwise than by the Thessalonian believers assisting his labors by their fervent and effectual supplications. The statement of the text is tantamount to the assertion, that unless the churches would pray for the success of the Gospel Ministry, the Word of God would never have free course and be glorified. Now, my friends, this is a most singular, a most important, nay, a most momentous declaration, and it

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involves some very striking practical lessons. We are apt when we read of the apostolic missionaries, and of their indefatigable labors, and their splendid success, to explain them entirely on the ground of the signs and miracles by which they were accompanied. When we read of the congregated thousands at once, who, amidst the levity and the bustle and the worldliness of a crowded city, instantaneously abandoned their wicked ways for the faith and the baptism of Jesus Christ. When we read of the Ethiopian courtier, who, by the brief expositions of Philip was ushered into the joys of Christian adoption. When we read of the brutal wretch that in the dark dungeon-cells of Philippi, exchanged the purposes of the suicide for the hopes of joy hereafter, and the experience of happiness on earth. When we read of the scowling Sophists of Athens, and the panders of Ephesian idolatry, trembling at the rapid diffusion of the Gospel, and the consequent decline of their own vicious abominations. When, in one word, we read of royal profligates and Roman grandees being unable to hear the preaching of Christ crucified, without the convulsive shudderings of awakened guilt, and the all but final determination of renouncing the unfruitful works of darkness for the purity of Christian example, our fervent admiration of the power of Gospel truth, is attended with the impression that that power was elicited and upheld by the miraculous gifts of the apostolic age. But if we look narrowly at the apostles themselves, we shall find that they attributed their mightiest operations, not to what the Spirit did through their own miracles, but to what the Spirit did through the prayers of the church. We shall

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find that while they depended for everything on the goodness of the Divine grace, they expected this, not so much through personal exertions as united supplications, and that, in fact, they found in the prayerful devotions of the church the keystone and the climax of their ministerial power. Miracles were mighty, but prayers are omnipotent. Supernatural gifts sometimes fell short, but prayer knows no such limitation. That Peter who had healed the impotent beggar at the temple gate and inflicted such condign punishment on the lying lips of Ananias and his spouse, who had ministered the gifts of the Spirit to whole companies of the faithful, reanimated the pulse of life in the sunken frame of Dorcas, could not extricate himself from the toils in which Herod sought to take away his life. The shackles of his prison and four quaternions of military watchmen seem to have outstripped the capacity of his miraculous power. But the incessant prayers of the faithful in his behalf, assailed as it were the throne of grace with such an irresistible effect that the prison chains were burst, and the gates were spontaneously and suddenly thrown open, and an angelic guide was at hand to conduct the wondering disciple to a place of safety. Besides this, we find the apostles constantly representing the prayers of the Church, and not the supernatural endowments they possessed, as the secret of all their efficiency and success. We find Paul ascribing his deliverance to the prayers of the Church, and nothing can be more urgently importunate than his requests for the prayers of the people in behalf of his work. "I beseech you," he says to the Roman Church, "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit,

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that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me." "Pray for me," says he to the Ephesians "that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel." "I know," says he, speaking to the Philippians concerning some causes of offence, "I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer." "Continue in prayer," he says to the Colossians, "withal praying for us." And why for us? Why, "that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ." "Brethren," he says to the Church at Thessalonica, and that, even when he was exposing their mistakes and guiding them through dangers, "Brethren," he says once again, "pray for us," and he adds the motive of our text, "that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." Thus, then, it appears that the mighty changes and numerous conversions effected through the ministry of the apostle are, under the agency of the Spirit, to be attributed, not so much to the power of these messengers of the cross, as to the fidelity and constancy and warmth of that spirit of prayer which, in the primitive ages, was so copiously poured out over the Church, and was the great means of causing the Holy Ghost to bless so liberally the exertions of the Christian ministry wherever they laboured. Thus, too, my brethren, does it appear in what manner we may in our religious services obtain that Divine presence and blessing, without which there can be no real profit.

We can be enriched as a Church only in that way by which the primitive Christians obtained so much spiritual prosperity, and what was that, but just, as we have seen, a universally diffused spirit of prayer

and supplication? Had each person at will been left during the seven plentiful harvests of Egypt, to lay up or not to lay up against anticipated scarcity as he might happen to choose, what a mortality must have ensued; but when, under Joseph's supervision, the excess of every field was stored up in granaries against the years of want, everything was safe. So, my brethren, when the welfare of the Church is not entrusted to the prayers of a scattered few, but is made the business of every believer, surely God will be persuaded to open the windows of heaven and pour down upon them an abundant blessing. All Christians are priests, and when the new and living way to the presence of the Most High is incessantly trodden by them, they obtain the fulness of His salvation; and the fervent prayers of the whole Church are still, what they were of old, mightier than all miraculous endowments, for they control the right arm of God's omnipotence. They are the conduits and channels through which the influences of Divine grace are poured on the Church, and, in like manner, as on the material universe the lofty mountain summits draw down the showers and moisture of heaven on all the surrounding fields, and thus procure for vegetable life, all that is needful to nourish and sustain it, so the ever-ascending prayers of the whole Church are recompensed with the effusion of those heavenly dews and gracious showers which constitute the manna of the immortal soul.

"Ask," says the hearer and the answerer of prayer, "ask that ye may receive, that your joy may be full." He is willing to give unto them that ask Him, and while the prayer of faith has power with God, its

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being poured out by the whole congregation of believers, invests it with an urgency and a weight that invoke a full and a gracious answer. It is plain, therefore, my friends, that if the effectiveness of the preaching of the Gospel depends upon the outpouring of the Spirit, it depends also upon the co-operative agency of the prayers of the Church. Without this the soil is hard, stubborn, unproductive; but with this, the Word of the Lord has free course. It is deposited as precious seed, and it springs up to everlasting life. It is glorified in causing much fruit to be yielded to the praise and honor of God. Oh, my brethren, by the unceasing and universal employment of the exercise of prayer, strive that, among all of us, that Divine Word may have free course in enlightening our ignorance, in removing our guilt, in renewing our wills, in regenerating our hearts, in sanctifying our lives; and that it may be glorified in attesting the holiness of God, the excellency of Christ, the veracity of His Word, and the power of His Spirit; and that, as He Himself hath said (Isa. lv. 10-13), "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall

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come up the myrtle tree ; and it shall be to the Lord
for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be
cut off."

IX.

EMOTION IN THE PREACHER NECESSARY TO SUCCESS- FUL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL.

"As laborers in Thy vineyard,
Still faithful may we be
Content to bear the burden
Of weary days for Thee."

"By the space of three years, I ceased not to warn everyone,
night and day, with tears."—ACTS xx. 31.

To be a minister of Christ, in deed, and in truth, is to be a devoted man, absorbed in Christ's glory, and the salvation of souls. Such was Paul. We are disposed to lay great stress on the last two words in this passage. They inform us in one particular how Paul, as a Minister of Christ, did his work. It was with tears. No man ever entertained more correct views of the Christian ministry than he; nor did anyone ever discharge its high responsible duties with greater fidelity or success. The world would have been evangelized long ago, had all who have professed to be Paul's successors in the ministry, been anointed for their work as Paul was. He was a learned Jew; but it was neither his extraction nor his learning that gave him his pre-eminence in the ministry, for many a Gentile has been called of God to the same work, possessing stores of learning much more extensive and varied than his. He was an apostle, acting on the authority of an extraordinary commission, and endowed with supernatural gifts

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and powers. His extraordinary commission, however, did not authorize him to preach an extraordinary Gospel, or to enforce its claims by extraordinary means. It distinguished him from us, chiefly by the plenary authority with which it clothed him, to adjust the ordinances of the infant Church. We preach the same Gospel which he did, and we have the same facilities for giving it a lodgement in the heart which he had, if we except the demonstrations of miraculous power that were placed at his disposal. But what use did he make of these, and what ends were they intended to subserve? They were simply visible confirmations of the Divine authority under which he acted, the marked and splendid signets which the heavens put in his hands to accredit his commission. But men were converted under his ministry just as they are converted now; not by miracles, but by the Spirit and truth of God. He was doubtless endowed with such a profusion of ministerial gifts as that, from that age to this, the Church has not seen his parallel. But what gave him this distinction and mighty pre-eminence? Not his commission as an apostle, not his vision, and revelations, and miracles; but the burning ardor, the invincible energy, and the unparalleled self-devotion which he brought to his work. In these respects he stood alone among apostles, and here he holds a solitary prominence among the stars that have since been set in the Church's firmament. No man has ever bestowed upon the propagation of Christianity the same amount of well-directed zeal, exact fidelity, untiring industry, and unfaltering courage that Paul did. The beamings of his spirit are seen in that small fragment of his history which

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we have already recited to you. "By the space of three years, I ceased not to warn everyone, night and day, with tears." This was his contribution to a single church. But he spent thirty-three years in the ministry, and the whole period was employed just as he had spent the three years at Ephesus. What a flood of tears must he have shed in that time! What a victim to emotion must have been the manly spirit of this flaming herald of the cross, for it is manly to weep where there is occasion for weeping! The sensibilities of the heart duly excited, are a fragrant atmosphere investing the soul, and shedding its soft and balmy dews on its powers. They are the golden tissues that are woven into the delicate but immortal texture of the mind. They are the electric fluid that pervades the regions of the heart, throwing its subtle influences upon the springs of thought, and shooting its lightnings through every channel where the mind is wont to give expression to its hidden movements. Our apostle could not, under any circumstances, be suspected of either imbecility or fanaticism, as he was under the government of God's unerring Spirit. His tears issued from fountains which that influence had opened and sanctified. There must, however, exist in his ministry, independently of this influence, adequate and perceptible causes for them. These causes it is our intention in the sequel of this discourse to bring out distinctly to your view; for we have proposed to illustrate and establish the following proposition, viz.: That emotion in the preacher is necessary to an effective and successful proclamation of the Word of God; and also, to answer the following enquiry: By what means may this important attribute be

secured to our ministry? We have, however, a few preliminary remarks to offer, and

First.—By emotion, we do not mean a mere pathetic tenderness, or a weeping sensibility only and always pervading the bosom; but those different states of the affections, which correspond with the import of the different themes on which we dwell, and the nature of the varying circumstances with which we are surrounded. Nor, when we speak of emotion, do we mean those undefinable impulses, or sudden bursts of animal feeling which sometimes flood the soul, carrying away the landmarks of reason and thought, and leaving the mind to the mercy of a resistless tempest of passion. But we mean that deep and holy movement of the affections, which has been produced by the energy of truth understood and believed; such a state of feelings as corresponds with the import of truth. When such emotions have a place in the preacher's soul, they will depict themselves in his countenance, and find expression in every look, and tone, and gesture. They will infuse into his manner an earnestness and warmth which will leave to the hearer no alternative but a clear conviction of the perfect honesty of the speaker's heart. These will be to his audience visible demonstrations of the preacher's faith.

Secondly.—In the economy of salvation the natural relations of things are not overlooked. All the instruments and agencies which God ordinarily employs to give efficiency to the Gospel, have an adaptedness in themselves to accomplish the ends for which they are employed. Hence, the different degrees of success which attend the ministry of good men. One has more and better qualifications for

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his work than the other. His ministry has an adaptedness in it to produce effect, which the ministry of the other has not. The Spirit of God does not employ our agency to accomplish His purposes, in the renovation of human hearts, simply because we are good men ; if He did, then piety would constitute the only qualification for our work, and the Church might dispense with the services of an ordained and instructed class altogether. But this would accord neither with the requisitions of the Gospel, the demands of the Church, or the nature of things. Such, however, is not the course which God pursues in the choice of agencies to carry forward His designs. He employs appropriate, and generally no other than those which are seen by us to be appropriate instruments, to accomplish His purposes of grace. Now, we have to remark that emotion is necessary to render preaching such an instrument, and without it this agency cannot possess the adaptedness necessary to give it the greatest effect upon mind. This is the aspect under which we wish to present the subject.

Thirdly.—A susceptibility of emotion is not the only qualification which a preacher of the Gospel will need. A slight practical acquaintance with the difficult and responsible duties of the ministry will teach a man, if he has not learned it before, that something besides feeling will be requisite to qualify him skilfully to handle the Word of God. He will soon understand that his office has introduced him into a sphere, which adequately to fill would require arch-angelic powers ; and whatever the resources of his mind may be he will ever see occasion to mourn that he has drunk no deeper at the fountains of

wisdom and knowledge. When, therefore, we speak of the importance of emotion, let it at no time be understood that we speak to the disparagement of those other endowments for our work which are to be derived only from a thorough acquaintance both with secular and sacred science. The great interests of the Church are never so fearfully jeopardised, as when committed to the care of men who feel strongly, but know nothing. But we affirm, on the other hand, that not all the endowments which the most profound and varied learning can give, will render a cold and insensate preacher of the truth a successful one.

Now, to proceed directly to a consideration of the proposition which we have announced, viz: that emotion is necessary to an effective and successful dispensation of the Word of God.

1st.—It cannot be denied that the themes on which the preacher dwells demand emotion, and are calculated to inspire it. The minister of Jesus is an ambassador of God. When he speaks in his official character, he speaks for God, and when he pleads with men, he pleads with them on the behalf of God. The mission on which he is sent is one of mercy, involving, however, the most extended and multifarious interests. On the part of God he is charged with the vindication of the honors of His throne and the rights of His government; and in the prosecution of this high commission, is brought up to a near mental view of the unutterable glories of the Eternal Godhead, and is conversant with scenes and objects that awe and thrill and bespel the heavenly world. When he pleads for God he is called to a contemplation of the most astonishing

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benignity, the most amazing love, and the most affecting condescension, all, however, misrepresented, abused and scorned in this apostate world. And when he pleads with man he pleads with an immortal being, convicted of treason against the government of God, and condemned for his crimes to a state of punishment for which, irrespective of the Gospel, there is no relief, and to which there can be no termination. He meets him at a moment when, for anything that is known, the alternative is before the sinner to escape then or never from impending ruin. His work with him is the work of a legate of Jehovah, bearing accredited conditions of pardon, and charged to make the overture with every testimony of love, and every demonstration of concern which a creature is capable of giving on the behalf of God. To find now that his message meets with no accordant response from the sinner's heart, that the apathy of death has spread itself over all his faculties, or the keen resentments of injured pride have prepared him for a flat denial of the claims of God. What can be more solemn or impressive than the crisis? What a time to the faithful ambassador for the heavings of emotion and the pleadings of love? Can he view such a scene and yet remain unmoved? This is a fellow-man endowed with the same susceptibility of pain and pleasure with himself. Must he be shut out of heaven? Must he bear no part in the sweet and undying songs that will be chanted in that blessed world? Must his eye ever weep and his bosom heave with grief, and the waves of eternal woe dash and roll over his frightened and fainting spirit? Here is a pardon written out and sealed with blood, bearing the impress

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of the cross, and proffered on terms the most gracious and condescending; but he rejects it. It opens to his soul the only refuge from impending wrath; but he refuses to embrace it. He is standing on the jutting and slippery edge of that profound abyss where billows of fire are rolling, and the slightest breath of God's anger may at any moment sweep him from his position and bury him in the flood below. Has the messenger who is sent to warn him of his danger and plead with him to escape, no reason for emotion? Is no occasion given to his heart to dissolve, and his eye to weep? The benevolence of the Gospel can execute no commission like this and leave the heart unsoftened by its influence. The sufferings of Christ are the central point from which the cheering beams of the Gospel all radiate and diverge. The preacher of the Gospel must therefore be often at the cross. He must often look upon the bleeding sacrifice, and take account of the doings of that dreadful hour, when the powers of darkness were unchained, and Christ was devoted a victim to their rage. In the circumstances attending the tragedy of His death, the treachery in which it was commenced, the duplicity and subornation by which it was carried forward, and in the barbarous cruelties which closed the horrid scene there, is more than enough to subdue and melt the most adamant heart. But, blend with these considerations, the perfect and acknowledged innocence of Jesus, with the fact that, as a victim to these tortures, He was altogether voluntary, and more than all, endured them for His mortal enemies, not excluding even the incarnate demons that pierced His limbs and danced around His cross, and who can re-

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frain from emotion? Was ever love like this, so pure, so comprehensive, so vast, and yet burdened with such sorrows, and humbled to such a death? Its achievements on the cross effected the world's redemption. On this is suspended all human hope. How can we handle themes like these, how can we deal with interests so interminable and vast, and not be the subjects of emotion, sometimes unutterable, always fervent and deep? The stupendous magnitude of the objects which the Bible proposes to man, the incomparable sublimity of eternal pursuits, the astonishing scheme of redemption by a Mediator, the native grandeur of a rational and immortal being "stamped with the impress of God," the ruins which sin has produced and the renovations which Almighty grace achieves, open to the herald of the cross fields of vision and thought, able to awe, and fire, and fill, and sublimate the most giant and enlarged mind.

2nd.—It is a demonstrative denial of the truth and importance of our message not to have emotion in the proclamation of it. It results from the constitution of the human mind that truths believed will affect it in proportion to their importance. Who does not look to have a convict—sentenced to death upon the scaffold, and before whose eyes the preparations for his execution are going forward—agitated and convulsed by the prospect before him? Insensibility under these circumstances would constitute undeniable proof either of a moral paralysis or of an invincible unbelief. Whether it were the one or the other, all who beheld him would regard him as a monster whom humanity should disown, or a victim to delusion, over whom humanity should

weep. The preacher of the Gospel is conversant with truths of the most solemn import, both to himself and his hearers ; and when, as an ambassador of God, he stands in the presence of dying men, to give utterance and demonstration to them, where this side of eternity could he find a position so fraught with responsibility or surrounded with circumstances so awfully solemn and affecting? If, standing as he does between the living and the dead, with the world above lending him its sympathies and the world beneath plotting defeat to his aims—himself a messenger of God to those who are objects of strife to both—no kindlings of interest; no throbbings of emotion are felt in his bosom, what must angels, what must devils think? The scene is one which must strike with amazement the spectators from both worlds. But a more solemn consideration is the effect which his apathy must have upon those to whom he addresses his message. For these, what remains but to deduce the conclusion, either that the Gospel is a fabrication or the man who proclaims it a traitor to his trust? Whichever alternative is taken, the avenues of conviction will be closed and the dominion of impenitence be rendered more settled and severe. Let a profound indifference surround the man who undertakes to speak in the name of God to his dying fellow-men on the concern of eternity; let a dying apathy infuse itself into his manner, or let him talk and act, like one who has only a professional task to perform, and what can save his message from the influence of a counter-testimony drawn directly from the living example of its inefficacy standing before their eyes? Under these circumstances it will be obvious to his hearers

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that he neither believes what he says, nor is concerned to have them believe it. Not only will he not commend himself to the conscience, but he will bring the influence of his experience to bear against the truth of his message. Who can tell upon how many minds the chains of impenitence have been rivetted fast and forever by such preaching, even when truth and truth only, has been proclaimed? The truths of the Gospel, solemn and momentous as they are, degenerate into idle tales in the hands of a speculative, heartless, soulless ministry. "Why," said a theologian of distinction to Garrick, the tragedian, "why do we, who preach the solemn and awfully grand truths of Christianity have so few to hear or believe us, while you, who deal only in fiction, have weeping throngs continually hanging on your lips?" "The reason is," replied the actor, "you represent truth as fiction, we represent fiction as truth."

Thirdly.—The advantages which truth has in the hands of a living preacher over the same truth on the pages of inspiration consist chiefly in the power which the preacher possesses of giving expression to the various emotions which truth is calculated to inspire. On the pages of the Bible truth has only an historical or abstract existence. In the person of its heralds, it has form, and motion, and life, and speech. In these its spirit has expression, and all its Divine lineaments are drawn out in living beauty, and the impress of its lovely image is seen, beaming from the preacher's eye. Through this medium a sympathy is begotten in the mind of the hearer with the things of another and eternal world. Prejudices are dissolved and indifference broken up, and truth is brought in contact with the heart, and the in-

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terests of the mind are insensibly aroused, and unseen agencies open a pathway into the recesses of the soul for the entrance of light and truth. These are among the primary reasons why preaching and not the inanimate page of revelation has been constituted the grand instrument of conversion to God. It possesses an adaptedness to accomplish this end which the Bible does not; and the Bible alone though circulated through the wide world, would never bring its population to God. The power residing in the human voice and countenance, to give expression to the varying emotions of the soul, is that chiefly which imparts to it this vast superiority.

Fourthly.—It is true, in point of fact, that those preachers who have been distinguished for this characteristic have been far more successful than others. There is an extraordinary unction and power attending the preaching of our own day. There is scarcely any portion of mind within the range of Christendom that has not in some measure been waked and moved by it. Many revivals of religion, attended with great power, and bringing multitudes of converts to Christ, have followed it; and the Church has been consolidated and roused and strengthened, and marshalled to efficient and systematic action by its influence. But what is the prominent feature by which the ministry of the present day is distinguished from that of other and less favoured periods of the Church? Not intellectual vigour or mental attainments, but the fire and unction of its eloquence. It is much more a practical and impassioned ministry than formerly, trained to action and baptized into the spirit of its mission. We cannot here call your attention to the comparative merits of

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individuals among our cotemporaries, but we may take a comparative view of the separate organizations of the Church. Where has preaching exerted its widest and most captivating influence? Among the Methodists in America, and the Welsh Presbyterians in England. The eloquence of the Welsh pulpit is stately but impassioned, and for a long period has been celebrated for its persuasive and enchanting powers. Its influence is felt upon every grade of mind, and it has given to the Gospel the most complete and signal triumphs which it has anywhere achieved in modern times. But the distinguishing feature of that Pulpit is emotion. It was once remarked of the preachers of the Methodist Church by a learned Infidel, that were they only panoplied in the literary armour which is worn by the preachers of certain other denominations, they would in a few years make a partial conquest of the world; a small compliment indeed to the intelligence of its ministry, but highly honourable to the unction and energy with which it is endowed. If we pass now to other periods of the Church we shall find them fraught with illustrations of the same truth. Who, among the compeers of Whitfield will wear in the heavens a crown studded with more or brighter gems than he? But what were the peculiar attributes of his preaching? Lucid illustration and fervid thought. The bespelling power of his eloquence resided in the singular and inimitable pathos that was infused into it. His soul seemed to have been red-hot and glowing with the devotional fire of the Heavens.

Baxter was styled the Apostle of his age, and Barrow the Shakspeare of the Church. The former,

Jeremiah-like, was a weeping Prophet, the latter, a learned and lofty Divine. Both of them were good men ; but we had rather wear the crown that will encircle the brow of the author of the "Saints' Everlasting Rest," than that which will adorn the head of his eloquent and gifted compeer. Go on to the age of the Apostles. When was the Church ever served by such a ministry, or the world so agitated and moved by the operations of twelve honest men. They were without earthly patronage, or wealth, or learning, (not that they were novices, having no suitable qualifications for their work, but that they were not profoundly schooled in the science of the age), they were, I say, without patronage, or wealth, or learning, or friends, but their voice reached the ears of kings and carried troubled thought into their bosoms, and shook their thrones, and electrified the nations, and changed the spirit and customs of the age. "The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." The power of God's Truth seemed to be concentrated in their hands, and wherever they wielded this sword of heavenly temper, it "pierced to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." They "so spake the Word, that multitudes both of the Jews and also of the Greeks," and other Gentiles believed. What was the secret of their success? After the demonstrations of the Spirit, which attended their preaching, and upon which all success depends, it was the artless manner in which they told the simple and sublime story of the Cross; and the honest and burning fervor with which they bore their testimony to its collateral and dependent truths. They were men whose spirit was fired and filled with

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the import of their solemn message. They went forth burdened with the magnitude of their work, keeping their eye on the consequences of their ministry, and remembering always that they were unto God "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one, the savour of death unto death, to the other the savour of life unto life." No wonder that the chiefest of them all should have exclaimed, under the pressure of these overwhelming responsibilities, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The ministry of the Prophets was characterized by the same spirit. "Oh," said one of them, when contemplating the sins and the afflictions of the Church, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people;" and when he saw how the people turned away their ear from hearing the law, he exclaimed in the language of deep and unfeigned grief, "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." And, as though it were the appropriate business of the Lord's Prophets to weep, he directed one of them to bear this message to his companions, "Let the Priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them." But we have higher authority with which to urge the claims of our subject than the example of Apostles or Prophets. Our Lord who was consecrated to an unchangeable priesthood, and held the stars of the Churches in his right hand, was for a season the Herald of His own Gospel. "He was anointed," He tells us, to preach "good tidings to the

meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." He executed His commission like one who perfectly comprehended its import, with all the amazing consequences that were to result from it. Well might His disciples, when they saw with what quenchless ardour he prosecuted His work, call to mind what had been written of Him in the Prophets "The zeal of Thine house, hath eaten Me up." As a preacher He was simple, grave, unearthly, pungent, mighty; developing fully the emotions of His soul, and always leaving with His hearers indubitable and resistless evidence of the perfect benevolence of His heart. Who could have stood unawed, and faced the lightnings that flashed from His eyes when, roused in spirit, He encountered the captious and hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, and woe after woe burst in thunder from His lips? or who could have remained unmoved under the soft beamings of that radiant countenance divine, when dissolved into pity, he threw His weeping eye over the blood-stained city of Jerusalem, and exclaimed, in view of its approaching doom—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes!" As a preacher, never man spake or felt like Christ.

Fifthly.—The condition of our hearers is such as calls most emphatically for emotion. This topic we have already partially illustrated. We shall therefore, here barely remark that, in the present state of the world, the Preacher of the Gospel, the Herald of the Cross, may go where he will and preach to

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whom he will, his eye must rest on the countenances of some of whom it will be impossible not to augur sorrowful things for them in another world. He must see and speak to those who, though accountable to God and destined to an immortal existence, are yet neglecting the concerns of their deathless souls, and in reference to whom he must entertain the most painful apprehensions that his ministry will prove only a savour of death unto death. To know, certainly, while he is mingling with them, and making the overtures of mercy to them, that, in a little season, he must meet them at the tribunal of the Great Judge, and may there take up a wailing over them as he sees them going out from the presence of the Lord to dwell with devils, and be the subjects of that wrath that shall burn to the lowest hell, must touch every heart that is not adamant. On the other hand, if he does but succeed in rousing them up from their delirious dreams, and in bringing them on to the foundations of hope, with what exulting joy must he anticipate the coronation day, when he shall meet the ransomed spirits, and the harps of gold shall be strung to their sweetest notes, and the crown all studded and radiant with these immortal gems, shall be set upon his temples by the hand of Christ.

Sixthly.—The Spirit of God, as a sanctifying agent, exerts His power chiefly upon the affections, which are the great sources of emotion. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness," and such-like excellencies. It is not the grand fault of human nature that it has no mental perception of truth, but that the affections do not correctly and adequately respond to its import. It is a

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chief design of the inhabitation of the Spirit to correct this evil, and under its influence the affections are not only diverted from forbidden to lawful objects, but they are rendered altogether more sensitive and vigorous than they were before. It cannot, therefore, happen that the man whose heart is duly subjected to this influence, shall have the sublime and thrilling truths of Revelation brought into continual contact with his mind, and yet be the subject of no corresponding emotions. The thing is impossible, both in philosophy and religion. But has the experience of Christ's ministers corresponded with the truth of our doctrine? Doubtless it has, so far as their experience has corresponded with the requisitions of the Gospel. Look at a single instance. Stephen is described as having been a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. As a consequence, his adversaries were unable to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. And if the countenance be regarded as a true index of the heart, what celestial impulses must have throbbed in his bosom at the moment when "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel." The mind of this illustrious and august Saint, speaking through "the glory of his countenance," carried burning thoughts into the bosoms of his accusers and Judges, and they were awed by the unearthly radiance that beamed in his face, more than by the Divine eloquence that flowed from his lips. We pass now to a brief consideration of the inquiry connected with this discussion—How may the important attribute of which we have been speaking be secured to the ministry?

We have one remark to offer before furnishing a

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direct reply. If there be any whose natural temperaments are so dull and phlegmatic that their affections can by no labour be disciplined into easy and powerful action, such we do humbly think are idiosyncratically unfitted for the Gospel ministry, and could not well be successful heralds of the cross. They may be far more useful in any other vocation. Now, to the enquiry, we reply,—

First.—Faith is the mainspring of all true emotion. There may be sensibility and the excitements of feeling without it, but no deep and intelligent movement of the affections. All excitement produced in any other way will be evanescent as the morning dew. Faith brings down to the direct view and intimate fellowship of the mind, the things that are unseen and eternal. It gives to the declarations of God, on subjects that are beyond the cognizance of sense and reason, the influence and the power of conviction belonging to experimental truths. Let the Preacher, then, the Herald of the Cross, have faith; let him credit the truth of the Message which he bears; let him believe in the actual presence, the spotless purity, and the infinite knowledge of God; in short, let his faith bring down to his view the Judgment-day, with its awful grandeur, its terrific scenes, and its changeless issues, and he will have emotion. He will feel and speak like one whose hands are ready to be grasped with those of his repentant hearers, in the weeping adieus of the Judgment.

Secondly.—The preacher of the Gospel must entertain profound and practical views of truth if he would feel an adequate and uniform interest in his work. The great sources of truth are the Word and

works of God. Here the perfections of the Deity are disclosed. In these, the demonstrations of His Godhead are made, and the glories of His infinite mind unfolded. But the Bible demands the Preacher's first and chief attention. This is the telescope through which the eye of his faith penetrates into distant worlds, and examines with minute attention the character and employments of their inhabitants, and brings back a true report of the laws and statutes, and statistics of the Kingdom. It is a glorious luminary, hung out from the moral heavens by God Almighty's own hand, designed to illumine the benighted footsteps of men on their journey to eternity. The volume embodies the wisdom of the Eternal mind, and every truth which it contains is a gem sent to us from the celestial world, and our riches are all treasured up in it. The Bible is therefore filled with truths of such vast interest to us, drawn from fountains so deep, and affecting relations so wide and sacred, that it is the proper business of life to study it, and if we study and believe it we shall feel its pervading influence on every power and passion of the soul. No superficial acquaintance, however, with this volume will answer the end which we have here in view. It must be studied—prayerfully, critically and habitually studied—else assuredly many of its Divine beauties will for ever be concealed from our view, and the freshness which rests on its pages gradually give place to the dull monotony of a dreary and tiresome familiarity. But our work with the Scriptures is not done when we have ascertained their original import. There is another and higher object still to be attained, and that is to imbibe the spirit and put ourselves in the

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possession of the practical bearings of the passage. Until this is done, the Scriptures will be a dead letter to us, and we may study them to eternity, and bring to their exposition the richest, the superbest literature, and the finest powers of criticism, we shall know nothing of them as we ought to know; but, whoever studies them to learn his duty, to discipline the affections of his heart, and expand his views of the character and works of God, shall find himself the subject of an influence that will fire his soul and endow it with an energy irresistible and Divine.

Thirdly.—Great advantage may be derived from a familiar acquaintance with the productions of such men as Leighton, Baxter, Howe, Edwards, Payson, Chalmers, Newton, Hall, and many others. Purer, loftier, and better spirits have never been lodged in terrestrial tenements. Some of them possessed giant powers of mind, approaching perhaps to the order of the seraphic, and were stars in the expanse of science and literature. All of them “walked with God” and maintained familiar, close, and continual intercourse with the heavens. In their writings we have the productions of ripe, sanctified and elevated minds, enriched by the results derived from a personal acquaintance with the power of a living and lofty Christianity, and disclosing to our view the workings of the heart when under the mighty transforming heaven-attracting influence of grace. It is not possible to be familiar with their writings without having a glow of holy emulation kindled in our bosoms, and experiencing in some measure an assimilating process at once pervading our hearts and our lives.

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Fourthly.—Pastoral labours faithfully performed within the range of our churches will decidedly tend to sustain and deepen the interest which we feel in our work. These employments, by bringing us into direct contact with the diversified conditions of society, and giving us familiar access to the hearts of our people, will enable us to ascertain minutely and accurately the true condition of the souls committed to our charge, and the actual success of our ministry among them. This intercourse will daily bring to our knowledge facts of the most interesting character, calculated to impress us with a just sense of the awful importance of our work, and to give us more enlarged and affecting views of the solemn responsibility which it involves. Nothing can more strongly tend to keep a fresh and increasing interest glowing over the field of our labours.

Fifthly.—To qualify us to speak to others in a spirit that shall commend our message to them and reflect honour on the Master whom we serve, it will be necessary that we make a previous self-application of the truths which we bear to them. This exercise will prepare us to sympathise with our hearers, and, we may add, to sympathise with God, as it will imbue our hearts with the spirit of our message, and prepare us not only to speak the truth in love, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. At the same time habits of extemporaneous delivery will contribute an important advantage for securing to our preaching the attribute of emotion.

Finally.—To give an efficient and sacred unction to our ministry it will be necessary to accompany it continually with prayer. God is the source and the only source whence an influence adequate to this

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purpose can be derived. A holy fervour in His work is the result of an internal anointing of His Spirit. The flame must be kindled at the altar of prayer, and there alone can it be kept burning. He who begins, continues, and ends his labours in prayer, shall assuredly have occasion to rejoice in the last day that he has neither run in vain nor laboured in vain. God will own his ministry and clothe it with power and salvation.

From this subject we may see that the office of the Sacred Ministry is, at once, most arduous and responsible. "Who," said Paul, "is sufficient for these things?" And if such language could be used by the greatest of the Apostles, much more by all ministers of the Gospel. The awful responsibility of such will not be fully known till the last great day, when it will be seen in a light awfully striking and sublimely interesting. May all Gospel Ministers think, feel, speak, and act under an overwhelming sense of such responsibility, and thus work with all their might and prepare to meet their God.

In the light of this subject should the professed hearers of the Gospel look at the vastness and awfulness of their responsibility, and inquire whether they have appreciated it. We are told that to whom much is given, of them also shall much be required. You have the Gospel of the Grace of God; you have Divine ordinances; you have Sabbaths; you have Providences,—all combining to teach you, and warn you to look out for immortality, and prepare for eternity. Oh, listen to their voice and consider your present position, and watch, and pray, and secure an interest in the Great Salvation, and mind the things that affect your present and future

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peace ere they shall be forever hid from your eyes. May you and I, as Preacher and hearers of the Gospel, so discharge our duties to God as that, when we shall be called to give a solemn account before the last tribunal, we may be enabled to do it with joy and not with sorrow, and receive the welcome sentence "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Amen and amen.

X.

ON SPIRITUAL INSENSIBILITY.

"Return, O wanderer to thy home,
'Tis madness to delay;
There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy's day.
Return, Return."

"Awake thou that sleepest."—EPHESIANS v. 14.

THERE is probably no person, my brethren, who attends in our religious assemblies, who needs to be informed that these words are spoken figuratively. We know, indeed, there are sometimes persons in our religious meetings to whom they can be literally applied, who come to church only to doze away the hours allotted to public worship, and to spend these golden precious moments in stupidity and forgetfulness. These persons are desired to take the words before us in their literal meaning, so far, at least, as to preserve a serious and watchful attention during the present service. Sleep, my friends, has often been styled the image of death, and it is so much like it, that if we were not very familiar with it we should be alarmed to see persons in this situation. We shall not attempt to give a metaphysical definition of sleep, or to treat the subject philosophically, nor do we profess to be able to do so in any satisfactory manner. It is a state of the faculties of which we know little, and concerning which there are various opinions; but, as the figure is founded in real circumstances and properties, which attend this

state of the system, it will be necessary to allude to them, in order to see the force of the analogy, and to pursue it to some profitable end. We intend at this time to consider it as an emblem of man's natural state, or of the condition of the sinner, as he is in his sins; not indeed but that it may be very well applied to Christians, also, as they are exceedingly apt to fall into a temporary sleep. Thus we find that the wise virgins slept as well as the foolish; and the same thing is intimated by our Saviour in His address to the Church of Laodicea, which He severely censures, because it was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. As the text was taken from an epistle addressed to Christians, we wish professors in this house to consider it as spoken to them, and to apply it accordingly. But what we propose in the sequel is to consider it as emblematical of the security of man in his natural state. Let us, then, attend a little to the analogy, and—

First.—Sleep is a state of insensibility. The person who is asleep has all his senses locked up. If you cause the most beautiful objects to pass before him, he sees them not; he heeds not the most interesting scenes. He is wholly regardless of danger; though he may be on a precipice, he is not alarmed; nay, though an assassin stands before him with his murderous weapon pointed at his bosom, still he is regardless of it. This is just a vivid representation of the natural state of man in regard to Divine things. He is asleep. He sees nothing of the glory of God, and nothing of the beauty of holiness. He heeds not the dying love of the Saviour, and is utterly insensible to the most interesting scenes which were ever displayed in the universe of God. He is

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unconscious of danger; he sees not the sword of Divine vengeance suspended over his head, as it were by a single thread; he hears not the awful thunders of Sinai, which are rolling around him; he looks not into the deep and bottomless pit which is yawning before him; and he sees not the smoke of their torment which ascendeth up for ever and ever. It is true, indeed, that he hears in a certain sense; but like thunder to a person asleep, it appears distant, and he sleeps notwithstanding.

Secondly.—Sleep is a state of inactivity. This, indeed, is a natural consequence of insensibility. The person who is asleep neglects his business, of course, however important it may be, whether of body or of mind he is unable to pursue it. This, also, is a lively representation of the natural condition of man. He can never do anything while he is asleep; he can never take one step toward Heaven till he awakes from his slumbers. The work of his salvation remains neglected till he is roused by the Spirit of God from his stupidity, and constrained to flee from the wrath to come.

Thirdly.—Persons in sleep are very much given to illusions of divers kinds, called dreams, not founded in facts, and sometimes directly contrary to what facts will warrant. Thus, for instance, the poor prisoner who is confined with chains and manacles may dream that he is ranging at large; that he is the occupant of a throne or a palace; that he has thousands at his nod, and is surrounded with all the attractions of power and splendor. So, also, the man in poverty may dream that he is in affluent circumstances; that wealth floats into his hand by every breeze, and that he is richly provided with all

that can administer to his convenience and comfort. The hungry man dreams that he eateth, and the thirsty man dreams that he drinketh, but they awake and their souls are faint and empty.

So it is in reference to mankind. Life itself is a dream; and if you examine the greatest of men you will find them dreaming; and the only difference between them and the least usually is that their dreams are apparently a little more pleasant. Indeed, look at persons in every stage of life for an illustration of the fact, that life is a dream, and that men are dreaming. Behold it particularly in youth; see them dreaming of honour, of pleasure, of riches, of influence and of applause in the world! The young man puts on his armour, and triumphs by way of anticipation in his splendid and glorious career; but, alas! how soon their dreams vanish! Where are they who were once dreaming in like manner, in this congregation, only a few years ago? Their dreams are now over for ever; their illusions have all vanished and gone. Generation after generation passeth quickly away. One closely followeth upon the heels of another, and yet, those that are left, do not appear to find that their slumbers are disturbed in the least. Persons also often dream that all is well, when the house is on fire over their heads, and they are just ready to be consumed; and so poor sinners dream that it will be well with them, even when they are just ready to fall into that burning lake, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. We proceed now, my brethren, to suggest several considerations of the plainest kind, to induce sleeping sinners to awake. There is an analogy between waking from natural sleep, and

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from spiritual sleep. When we attempt to awake a person out of sleep we usually do it by sound; we speak to him and call him by name, and in some way which we cannot explain, he is affected by it, and comes out of his slumbers. So it is, also, by the instrumentality of sound that men generally who are in a spiritual sleep are awakened. Yes, my brethren, a sound has gone out into all the earth, and words unto the ends of the world, to awaken sinners out of their sleep. Not, indeed, that we are to suppose there is anything in the mere human voice that is able to produce this effect; no, my brethren, no human power, angelic, created, can do this; no reasoning and no eloquence, though it were that of the Arch-angel, is adequate to it. The slumber is too profound to be disturbed by reasoning, persuasion, or eloquence of any kind. Still, God makes use of means, and it is with the hope that He will make these means successful that we proceed to offer several reasons why you should awake out of sleep immediately. And the first reason which we shall offer is, that the light is already shining around us. A person of good character will not content himself to sleep long after the sun is risen and shining into his chamber, scattering the darkness of night. It is considered as disgraceful. Now, my brethren, the light has shone on us; not merely has the day-star dawned, and some streaks of light appeared in the horizon, but the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, and sheds His light around you, though you comprehend it not, for the light shineth into the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. There was a period which may be called the night—the times of ignorance, which God winked at. Persons who

slept under these circumstances were far less criminal, but now the Sun has arisen, and shed His illuminating beams into every corner, so that you are most inexcusable if you do not awake. Even the Jews who had some faint glimmerings of this light, were in some degree awake; and the poor heathen, also, who had only the dim and feeble taper of nature, which shone faintly on the path of duty, but not on the path of life.

Another important reason is, that others have awaked already, and are up and doing. Yes, blessed be God, thousands have heard the heavenly sound, and have arisen from their beds of sloth and obtained salvation. Multitudes of them have already passed into the most glorious state, and many more are perhaps at this very time entering the gates of heaven. Oh, my brethren, could you see them at this moment, could you witness their sublime joys, and could you hear their thundering anthems of praise, surely you could require nothing more to awake you. But there are others, also, in every part of the world that are awake, and are actively engaged in seeking salvation. In some places large numbers are awake, and are now waking up together to enjoy the light and comfort of spiritual and divine life. Multitudes are ready to testify to the efficacy of the sound by which they have been aroused from their spiritual slumbers. Some such, it may be, are to be found in this place, and even in this assembly. Admitting the probability that some are deceived, you cannot doubt that many have really awaked. Now, there was no reason which induced them to awake, which does not operate in your case with equal force.

Thirdly.—There is an important work for you to

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do, and it is impossible that you should ever do it, if you continue to sleep. It is a great and momentous work. It is nothing less than the work upon which you were sent into the world, the work of glorifying God and saving your own souls. This work must stand still until you awake, because it requires active exertion, and your present slumbering state is inconsistent with activity. It is a work of prayer, it is a work of repentance and faith, of renouncing sin and forsaking it altogether. It is the very work for which you were made, preserved, and governed; for which the Son of God came into the world, and for which He labored and died. It becomes you, therefore, to awake out of sleep and begin this work without any delay. You have also a most important interest at stake, an interest which is not confined to this world; which is not to exist merely through this short life and then to cease to be. It is something of unspeakable value, and which will last for ever. Your title to all the joys of heaven, to those robes of honor, to those crowns of glory, to those fruits of immortality, to those rivers of life, to the blessed society above, to the immediate presence and fruition of God and the Lamb, and to live and reign with them for ever—depends on your awaking out of sleep. Oh! think then, what you will lose by remaining in this lethargy. Think what you will give in exchange for the richest bequest in the vast universe; think how mean, how grovelling do all earthly joys appear, for which you spurn the blazing crown of glory which even angels might covet, and which shines so brilliantly in the world of light. You are ready, perhaps, to say at present, all is well; let us have our worldly possessions, our pleasures

and our profits here, and we will not envy the pious either their comforts or their hopes. But, let me ask, what sort of calculation is this. If you are not downright atheists there is nothing so infatuated as these sentiments, unless it be a conduct conformed to them. Awake, then, oh, awake! Let the angels who are awaiting the effect of this exhortation carry the transporting news to the heavens that you have awoke. There is reason to believe that these holy beings are constantly wondering at the exhibitions which God is pleased to make to them of His glorious goodness, and power, and grace; but what more calculated to excite their astonishment and their horror, than to see a congregation of sinners slumbering over these awful realities; closing their eyes against all the light and glory of salvation, and sleeping on in a state of sin and condemnation.

But it is impossible for me to represent this subject to you in all its vast importance. Before we can understand it fully we must grasp Eternity. We must be able to soar to the heights of Heaven, and to plunge into the fathomless depths of Hell, to comprehend the joys and the sorrows which an immortal spirit is capable of experiencing to everlasting ages. We shall therefore drop this point, and pass—*Fourthly*—to another consideration of a very tender and yet of a very interesting nature, which ought to awaken you and to inspire you with life and activity, in attending to your spiritual concerns. It is not only that God has given an awakening call to our slumbering world, but has sent forth His own Son, to seek and to save that which was lost; that He has appeared in our world, and has travelled

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about in a state of suffering and sorrow for our sakes, and finally died that we might live. Though we have not seen Him ourselves, there have been many witnesses to the fact, whose testimony is left on record, and who could neither deceive nor be deceived. His voice is now heard saying to every impenitent sinner in this assembly, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He knocks at your hearts by His ministers, His Word, His Spirit, and His Providence. Every time you see a minister ascend the pulpit you may consider it a certain proof that Jesus is calling on you to awake out of sleep; every time the sanctuary is open on earth, a certain proof that there is ready for you a heavenly temple, an upper sanctuary; and every time that you open the sacred volume, a certain evidence that Jesus does not forget you. Are there not some here at whose hearts Jesus has often knocked, and gone away without finding admittance? He now calls on these persons again to awake out of sleep. Listen, then, to His gentle whispers,—they are the sounds of mercy calling you to salvation. This may be your last opportunity, the last call which you will ever receive. We know not, indeed, that it will be so; but we know that such cases do frequently occur, and it would be no miracle if it should be so with you. Yes, my brethren, if you continue to sleep on after the present call, Jesus may never address you again. It is true we have no certain knowledge concerning any individuals, that they have fallen asleep for the last time,—that the Saviour will no more call on them to awake; but we have reason to fear concerning many, that this may be their deplorable case. Awake, therefore, you that hear His voice; the Master has

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come and calleth for you, and if you do not awake He may never call you again.

This leads us to the *Fifth* and last consideration which we shall suggest, and that is, if you do not awake now, there is a very great probability that you will sleep the sleep of death. Sometimes persons pass insensibly as it were from a state of deep sleep to death; and hence when persons have slept longer than usual, there is always something terrifying in it. Their friends become alarmed and think they have slept the last sleep; they may speak to them; they may attempt to rouse them, but it all effects nothing. They may gaze upon their eyes, but they will never be voluntarily opened until the morning of the resurrection. So the sinner also often passes from a state of profound spiritual sleep into the arms of eternal death. There is a connection between them which we cannot discover and explain. No doubt eternal death frequently begins in the soul in this world. Why is it that we see persons who have once been serious and anxious what they shall do to be saved, divest themselves entirely of all fear of punishment, and of all sense of God's displeasure, and become openly profane and abandoned? It is probably because they nourish in their bosoms the germ of eternal death, because, perhaps the sentence has already been passed, "Let him alone!" Sleeping sinners, awake! How unutterably full the thought of being awakened for the first time, and last too, in everlasting burnings: to think the poor soul, ere it has become disembodied, before it stands at that awful bar, and receives the sentence of eternal banishment. Oh! how dreadful to think of the immortal spirit awaking for the first time, in

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a fierce and fiery hell. And yet this may be your case if you do not awaken soon. You are like a person asleep in a house which is on fire over your heads, and just ready to be enveloped. If you do not now awake, presently we shall know by your dying shrieks that you have awakened too late, and that you are ruined for ever. Oh ! could you look into the eternal world ; could you lift the veil and see all that is passing at this moment in the pit of woe ; could you have but one just and solemn impression of the judgment and the scenes that will follow, it would fill this whole house with consternation and horror ; and yet, all this is certainly approaching ; and yet it may be nigh, even at the door ; and yet—we repeat it—this may be the last time you will ever hear it announced, till you actually enter upon it all.

Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men. We persuade and beseech you by the dreadful denunciations of Divine wrath, by the lightnings of God's vengeance, by the thunders of His fury, by the abyss of torment, by the smoke which ascendeth for ever and ever, by all the dreadful apparatus of eternal misery, to awake and arise from the dead, and apply unto Christ for life. If these motives will not awake you, the probability is that you will continue to sleep till you are awakened in a more dreadful manner.

We might also mention, on the other hand, the joys of Heaven as furnishing further motives why you should awake out of sleep ; but here again is a subject to which it is impossible for us to do justice. We know there are crowns of glory, robes of beauty, palms of victory, thrones of immortality, and ever-

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lasting habitations of peace and felicity; but we dare not attempt to pierce the veil, to describe the joys, the transports and the triumphs of the blessed. They are beyond the conception of mortal minds. Think, then, of what you will lose and of what you may gain. Is there not some one, we ask, on this enchanted ground who is ready to listen to the heavenly call and awake? We know there is an enemy here who will exert himself to the utmost to prevent any impressions of Divine truth, and to catch away the good seed that has been sown. Be on your guard against him, for it may be that God designs mercy for some one who is here to day. It often happens that persons come to church without knowing why, and the event proves that God has brought them there to soften their hearts and to awaken them from their lethargy. Awake, then, my brethren, and believers on earth will rejoice over your salvation, and saints and angels in heaven will strike their harps to a bolder and nobler note of praise. Amen and amen.

XI.

SPIRITUAL BEAUTY, STABILITY AND PROGRESS.

Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course ;
Fire ascending seeks the sun ;
Both speed them to their source.
So a soul that's born of God,
Pants to view His glorious face ;
Upwards tends to His abode,
To rest in His embrace.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree ; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing. To shew that the Lord is upright, He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."—Lecture on Psalm xcii., verses 12-15.

THIS Psalm bears the title of a psalm or song for the Sabbath-day. It seems to be one of those brief but striking effusions in which the fervent piety of David at times embodied his thoughts. It begins with commending the offering of thanksgiving and praise as becoming and delightful, and specifies the morning and evening as most appropriate seasons for these duties, while by a beautiful amplification, the loving-kindness of God is mentioned as the topic of the exercise on the former occasion, and His Faithfulness as the theme on the latter. As expressive of the importance which he attached to these duties, and of the interest which he felt in them, he enumerates the musical instruments by which the exercise could be most efficiently performed, making music, as far as progress had then been made in that

art, contribute its aid in the solemn grandeur of the organ, the sweet and graceful touches of the psaltery, and the varied tones of a ten-stringed instrument. He then assigns reasons for the exercise, in the joy and triumph which the works of God had inspired and expresses, by exclamation, the greatness of these works, and the fathomless depth of the Divine thoughts from which they had issued. The works to which he refers, however, were not the wonders of creation—spread above, over the canopy of heaven, and around us on the vast theatre of the earth. He confines his view to that supremacy and justice which God displays in the government of the wicked. He contemplates His throne lifted up apart and alone, in unapproachable majesty, and beneath it, the wicked in their several spheres of business and pleasure, are beheld rushing up in momentary verdure, like the grass which, in the morning flourisheth, and in the evening is cut down. As the enemies of God, insulting His justice, and defying His power, they are overwhelmed before Him with ruin—scattered like autumnal leaves before the breath of a terrible storm. Amidst this desolation which overtakes the wicked, he refers to his own security, strength, and freshness, comparing himself to the vigorous and stately horn of the unicorn—with the extra privilege of the fragrance of anointing oil, to refresh and beautify him; and of witnessing the utter abortiveness of the attempts of the wicked to injure and annoy him. He thus breaks forth in the poetical description of the prosperity and fruitfulness of God's people, contained in the passage selected for exposition. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree," as if he

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had said, "Thou Lord art just and supreme. The wicked on thy footstool are permitted to live for a season. Proud and secure, they spread their leaf to the sun, and rejoice in their imagined exemption from Thy vengeance and control. But this security is short-lived, their pride a delusion. Thy judgments come forth—they are withered—they are torn assunder—they are dispersed. The scene of their recent prosperity and pomp is covered with wrecks and fragments; ruin overwhelms them, and they perish utterly. Not so Thine own—a brighter verdure and a statelier growth distinguish them. Thy faithfulness, displayed in the destruction of Thine enemies, is manifested in their growing stability, strength, and beauty. As a well-watered and fruitful garden, so is Thy sanctuary; as a range of palm-trees, and as a forest of cedars, so is the assembly of Thy saints. They flourish amidst ruins, they survive amidst judgments, and even to the very last their branches are loaded with fruit and their leaves are rich in fragrance."

In expounding these words, let us advert to the designation given to the people of God; they are the righteous; to their prosperity—they flourish like the palm-tree and grow like a cedar; to their situation—planted in the house of the Lord, they flourished in His courts; to the period mentioned—they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; to the reason of their prosperity—to show that the Lord is upright; and finally, to the testimony borne by the Psalmist to the subject: "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

First.—The character of believers. They are the righteous. In an apostate world this seems a strange

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designation. Man was made righteous under the first covenant, and while he continued to obey, he stood in spotless beauty before his Maker. But the one act of sin obscured the brightness, disordered the constitution, and destroyed the peace of his nature; and now, through the transgression of Adam, all are sinners. "There is none righteous, no not one." It is true that men imagine they possess a righteousness of their own still; and not a few, like the apostle in his natural state, "alive without the law, ere the commandment came," entertain the hope that they will enter heaven in virtue of their own obedience. But this hope is a sheer delusion. The first covenant is syllabled in fire, and speaks death to the sinner. It demands absolute perfection, and the slightest departure from it, inevitably and universally exposes to condemnation. There are great diversities among men, some being decent—formalists in religion, and agreeable members of society, while others are profligate, profane and turbulent. But all are destitute of righteousness in the eye of that law which nothing short of perfection can satisfy, and in the judgment of that God, whose will the law is. The sinner's righteousness is a broken reed, on which if he lean, it will go into his hand, and inevitably pierce it; in other words, perdition will be the fearful result. But we find the Apostle Paul speaking of a "righteousness of God, without the law," styled "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." And again, "I count all things but loss, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through

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the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith." Now this righteousness which is of God, is given to sinners who have no righteousness of their own, through faith in Christ. Faith is the hand of appropriation, the channel of reception. This is the righteousness wrought out by Christ in His obedience to the law; that obedience of which it is said that it "magnified the law and made it honourable." This righteousness imputed to the sinner by faith, justifies him; renders him blameless in the eye of the condemning law; puts him in the forensic position of absolute, untainted merit, and gives a title to acceptance and eternal life. It is a beautiful robe, covering the whole man and veiling every defect; and such is its peerless worth that there is no condemnation to those who possess it. Hence the people of God are all righteous, and hence the grand designation of the Saviour is, "The Lord our Righteousness."

There is another righteousness mentioned in the Bible as belonging to believers—the righteousness which they possess, as renewed by the Holy Spirit. The progress of this righteousness is expressed by the term Sanctification, which admits of an everlasting development. To suppose that God would accept as righteous any sinner while the love of sin continued to reign in that sinner's heart would be an impeachment of His own essential purity, a dishonour done to His consummate rectitude. In providing the righteousness of Christ for the sinner's acceptance, God has provided for the renovation of the heart, so that he who is justified, is also renewed; and the renovation of which he is the subject, implies the establishment of righteous principles;

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and, as the fruit of these, a *measure* of acceptable obedience to the Divine will. The justifying righteousness and the inherent righteousness of the believer, are thus inseparable, though totally and eternally distinct. The former is a change of state from condemnation to acceptance; the latter is a change of nature from the love to the hatred of sin. Imputed righteousness is relative, inherent righteousness is personal; the one confers a *title* to heaven, the other a *meetness* for heaven. The one is perfect, the other is progressive. The one is an act, the other is a work; but they are as inseparable as light and colour, fire and heat. It is true the inherent righteousness of the converted sinner is imperfect and far from being sinless. In all things he offends and comes short. Righteousness predominates, but not without much resistance. Its empire is shaken by conflict, its power enfeebled and almost neutralized by obstacles, and at times it even seems to be dethroned and abased under the temporary usurpation of evil. But it becomes more and more vigorous, firm and complete. It is indestructible as the Spirit which imparts it. It strikes a deeper root, acquires a firmer texture, and a more expansive form, and yields a more copious and delightful produce. Sanctification gathers all the features of the Divine image; adds glory to glory, and at length it will be a finished resemblance, like the righteousness of faith, gloriously and spotlessly perfect. The righteous will shine as the brightness of the firmament. The expanse of moral beauty will embrace the whole nature. The faintly traced outline will be filled up in all its parts. Not a

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shadow of imperfection ; not a stain of corruption will dim the harmonious splendor ; but each in the number numberless, of the ransomed of the Lord, will be holy as He is holy, perfect as He is perfect,—shine forth like so many stars in the celestial firmament, and brighten, more and more to “eternity and eternity.” They shall be like Him for they shall see Him as He is.

Second.—The prosperity of the believer.—“He shall flourish like the palm tree ; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” Various comparisons are employed in Scripture, to illustrate the spiritual life. Some of these are general, others particular and local. Thus, it is occasionally compared to natural life ; with an infancy of much weakness, a childhood of peril and promise,—a youth of ardour and enterprise, and a manhood of strength and maturity. Christians are babes, children, young men ; while mention is made of the stature of the perfect man in Christ. In like manner, images of a local kind, from the objects and appearances of external nature are also frequently used. Israel, for example, is said to grow as the lily and to revive as the corn. Judea, indeed, was rich in similes. It was a land that “God cared for, from the beginning to the end of the year.” It was a good land, “a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills ; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and figtrees and pomegranates ; a land of oil, olive and honey.” Vegetation there was unusually luxuriant. As the eye looked abroad upon it, the senses were delighted, the imagination awakened. Hence the abundant imagery of the inspired writers. The palm tree and the cedar were striking

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objects. Stately and verdant they contributed to adorn the landscape while they were highly useful, the one by its copious fruit, the other by its fragrant wood, and both by their shadow. References to both are frequent in the Old Testament. From what is said of the wicked in a preceding part of the Psalm, it would appear that the idea of permanence was present to the mind of the Psalmist in these similes. "The wicked," he says, "spring up as grass," but the righteous are as the palm tree and the cedar. The grass is verdant, but only for a day. The heat of noon at once develops its growth, and exhausts its juices; and before that sun which dawned on its tender leaf has set in the west, it is withered and dead. But the palm tree and the cedar flourish through successive years. Their verdure continues amidst the heat of summer and the cold of winter. So is it with the wicked and the righteous. The wicked appear to prosper for a season. They are secure; it may be rich, powerful and honoured; but soon their prosperity is dried up. Sin, like a secret canker, withers their gourd; their calm is ruffled, their confidence destroyed, and their greatness smitten to the dust. But the righteous abide. Storms of trial pass over them, but they still survive. The verdure of their privileges and holiness, fed by perennial sources, continues bright and untainted; and time and trials seem but to deepen its tints and renew its freshness. The grand idea, however, suggested by the simile of the text, is that of progress, unwearied, irresistible, illimitable progress. The palm and the cedar not merely continue while the grass withers, but they shoot up, extending their branches, multiplying their leaves,

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increasing in fruitfulness, and acquiring a stability and strength, which the storm that once bent them like twigs, can scarcely disturb. Now, believers in like manner continue to grow, and hence their path is compared to the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. This growth, indeed, is frequently enjoined in the Word of God. Not merely are active exertion, zeal and watchfulness, the subjects of particular precepts, but positive, persevering progress is enjoined. Thus, believers who are said to grow up into Christ in all things, are exhorted to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They are further exhorted to "desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby." Paul thanks God, because "the faith of the Thessalonians groweth exceedingly," and writing to the Philippians, he says, that "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus." In one respect believers are to be steadfast and immovable, that is in the purity of their principles and the ground of their peace; but the principles themselves are to be more clearly and fully apprehended, and more distinctly and extensively exemplified, and the peace is to be met with a larger measure of qualification to enjoy it, and to be sought after with a more intense earnestness and importunity of desire. As believers are enjoined to make progress, so are they conscious of a desire to do so. A lively perception of their defects is a characteristic feature of their renewed state; and this awakens and maintains desires after higher excellence. The image of

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God displayed in the perfections of Christ is the object of their admiring contemplation; and as they compare themselves with it—look, time after time, at the matchless splendor of the model—they are overwhelmed by a sense of shortcoming which would extinguish ambition were it not for the promise of grace. But knowing that they have not been sent forth on the spiritual warfare on their own charges, they are encouraged and stimulated; they labor to imitate and strive to be conformed; while, as the resemblance brightens and the copy improves, the ardour of desire is heightened, and the vigour of its impulses is increased. With progress, the conception of excellence extends, and the conception of excellence is the generation of its desire. Nor do believers merely desire to make progress; they consider and feel it to be their privilege. They know that fulness dwells in Christ for their benefit. They believe that their strength will be renewed for the purpose of enabling them to “mount up as on eagles’ wings, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.” They are assured that it is a provision of the new and better covenant, that they will receive grace for grace. God is their “sun and shield,” having promised to give them grace here and glory hereafter. The Throne of grace is the treasury of their spiritual supply. Thus they grow and shoot up to spiritual manhood, adding grace to grace, virtue to virtue. Their beauty, indeed, is not unstained, nor their strength unchecked; but fostered and cherished by Divine grace, their latent life expands and matures, and as it proceeds amidst the opposition of conflict and the depression of trial, gives out more abundant evidence of vigour, and brighter

indications of the coming glory. "They flourish like the palm tree; they grow like a cedar in Lebanon."

Third.—Observe their situation: "Being planted in the house of the Lord, they flourish in the courts of our God." The house of the Lord means the Sanctuary. It is termed His house to denote that there, in a peculiar and gracious manner, He manifests His presence. He is everywhere;—abroad in the fields; on the wide ocean; and amidst the splendor of the numberless worlds that roll in space; but in the Sanctuary, He is present in the exercise of a grace and kindness most attractive and endearing, which make it, compared with the rest of creation, His house. It is termed His courts, to denote that there He is to be nearly and favourably approached. All space is His habitation, the universe His dominion, from the brightest summit of heaven to the darkest depth of hell; but as earthly Monarchs have Courts, where they appear before their subjects in royal state, receive homage, and answer petitions; so the Sanctuary is a place where God is to be waited on as a King, to be beheld in His glory, and to be entreated for gifts befitting His royal dignity and power. Now, by the figurative language of the passage before us, the Sanctuary, which is thus the most honored and hallowed of earth's scenes, is represented as a garden rich in the beauty of a luxuriant and stately vegetation. Amidst the barrenness of the surrounding earth, it is as an enclosed and fertile field which the Lord hath blessed, on which the choicest dews of heaven descend and the brightest sunshine rests. Believers are trees of righteousness, adorning this lovely and sheltered spot, each spring-

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ing up in beautiful verdure and exuberant fruitfulness. And, indeed, the Sanctuary is mentioned in Scripture in terms of endearment which prove it to be a scene of high privilege and holy delight. See the care with which the ancient Tabernacle was reared. At first, in the wilderness, when they were yet at the foot of Mount Sinai that burned with fire, each of the chosen people brought his contribution of gold and precious stones, and purple and linen, or whatever he had; and the skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab, the wise-hearted and cunning workmen, was put forth to construct the altars and implements, and symbolical figures of the house of God. When a fixed temple was built, Solomon dedicated the wealth of his kingdom to the magnificent undertaking. Tyre sent its artificers and its purple, Egypt gave its fine linen, Lebanon yielded its cedars and its firs, and Parvaim its gold. The Temple crowned the summit of Sion, which was the hill of beauty, the wonder and joy of the whole earth! And hence the associations which made Sion so dear to the heart of the true Israelite. It was the chosen abode of Jehovah; "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts." "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts." There is no fixed temple, no single mountain set apart for worship now. Wherever men meet to worship, there is the house of God, but it is still an honored and sacred spot. There God dwells. There His people approach Him, and behold His glory. There they commune with the Father and the Son. There the ordinances of grace are sustained and dispensed. There the truths of

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salvation are proclaimed. There the communion-table is spread, and the marriage feast of the King's Son is prepared. There God bestows the blessing, even life for evermore. There He deals out the provision of Sion, and satisfies her poor with bread. There His people see His power, and are satisfied with His goodness. There He has caused the horn of David to bud, and ordained a lamp for His anointed.

Believers are spoken of as planted or fixed in the house of God. Unless trees are planted, they cannot grow or yield fruit. So believers cannot make progress or be productive unless they are fixed in the Sanctuary. It may be asked, however, how can they be fixed there? Life cannot be spent in ordinances. The Sanctuary at best can only occupy a few hours of the week. But the language of the text implies that believers are fixed in their attendance there. As it often happens that they receive their first saving impressions within its walls, so is it always endeared to their hearts, as the scene of their spiritual birth, the cradle of their heavenly life. God, they know, may be met elsewhere, but the Sanctuary is the place where He delights especially to dwell. He has chosen it as the spot where He is to be waited on, where His people are to receive their spiritual food and refreshment; where the smiles of His love are to be most sweetly enjoyed, and the riches of His grace most profusely displayed. They are glad, therefore, when it is said unto them, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." They attend it with earnest desire and holy delight. They attend it that they may honor Him whom their souls love; that they may hear those precious truths

which first brought light into their souls, and peace unto their hearts, and which are the continual ground of their hope and aliment of their strength. They attend it that they may ask and receive the supply of their wants, that they may commemorate redeeming love, profess their attachment to the cross, and be prepared for the toil and trials of their pilgrimage. They would rather sit in its vestibule than dwell in the most gorgeous tents of sin. They take pleasure in its stones, and favour its very dust. "The testimony of Israel is there, the set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." Their language is, "My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." "All my springs are in thee." The language of the text further implies that even when believers are not present in the Sanctuary in a bodily sense, they keep themselves spiritually present in it, by dwelling on its privileges, preserving alive the impressions which its exercises have made, and cherishing the dispositions and affections which they have awakened. From the mount they descend, like Moses, with their faces shining. From the altar they go forth like the priests of old, rich in the perfume of intercession. The savour of Divine things acts upon their thoughts. Amidst the small cares of the domestic hearth, and the agitating pursuits of business, they remember what they have learned and experienced there. They recall the views of God, of the Saviour's love, of the Spirit's power, of the wisdom of the covenant, of the fulness of the promises which made the sanctuary bright as the threshold of heaven. These shed a sanctifying,

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comforting, and exhilarating influence on their daily life, give the Sanctuary a sort of omnipresence, and perpetuate its instructions and its joys. And though these become fainter and less exhilarating, amidst the collisions of worldly intercourse and the necessary distractions of duty, they impart the interest of lively anticipation to the coming solemnity, and make the Sabbath, what indeed is its high import, a time of refreshment and a season of repose. "Sion is the perfection of beauty." The first day of the week is as good news from a far country. Its hours are not clogged with tedium, or its duties cumbrous from fatigue. It is as the shadow of a rock, the joy of a fountain, the splendor of a flash. Then the new life adds a cubit to its stature; then the leaf of profession is freshened, and the roots of faith are deepened. The clustering virtues and graces revive and expand, and believers flourish in the courts of their God. In speaking of the regular attendance, the profit and the joy of believers in the Sanctuary, let us advert to some common sins. There are many who come to the Sanctuary without interest, and, as might be expected, leave it without profit. Though they are regular in their attendance, they are not planted in it, and therefore they do not flourish. It is not a congenial soil. They never strike root. For them no sunshine falls, no dews descend. They are like stones or blocks of wood set up in a field. The Sabbath hangs heavily on their hands, and the ordinances of grace are to them forms without life and pools without water. The raptures of a David respecting Sion are mysterious to their minds. They may be conscious of some interest in the literature of pulpit exhibitions, or in the beauty and pathos of

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sacred music ; and, for a few minutes they may speak of the metaphysics which enlisted their intellectual interest, or of the picture which captivated their imagination ; but there is no interest felt in the duties of the Sanctuary, and there is no salutary recollection of appropriate feelings excited, or momentous truths realized. There are others less regular, who come to the Sanctuary with reluctance, easily find excuses for absence, and when absent, are not conscious of privation. The time rolls heavily, there is much tedium, the Gospel preached seems a dull and heartless monotony, and the Sanctuary service is a galling yoke. There are sinners from whose darkened minds the veil of unbelief has not been removed. The wonder is that they attend the Sanctuary, not that they receive no profit. Why, my brethren, do you come ? This is God's house ; He is to be met here, His message to be heard, and His glory to be seen. O ! then, how necessary to be thoughtfully concerned, engaged, while in God's house. This is the holy place, and to yield profit, it must be entered with holy preparation. Is it not mournful to see professing Christians of whom we would wish to hope better things, forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of too many is ? Does not the benefit of souls require constant attendance ? But is not the Sanctuary a scene of delight to the real believer ; and when no other duty immediately pressing interferes, will not its services be honoured and its benefits desired ? A trifling excuse will not be grasped at as a plea for absence. The zeal of that Christian must be low, who turns not to the Sanctuary with a joyful step. It is a high privilege to engage in its

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service, and like all our privileges, we hold it by a precarious tenure. Sickness may lay its arrest upon us, months of languishing and pain may roll on, and the Sanctuary be to us a forbidden scene. How keenly David must have felt, when the infirmities of age prevented him from mingling among the worshippers of Sion! His favourite seat would be at the window which looked toward the holy mountain. Often would he be placed there that his eye might rest on the dwelling place of Jehovah, and the memory of past privileges soothe his fainting heart!

Fourth. Consider the period at which believers are represented by the Psalmist as bearing fruit: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." The meaning of this language is not that all who are planted in the house of God survive to old age. We know that many who have exhibited unquestionable evidence of Christian faith have died in early life, in the prime of manhood, and long before the period of hoary age. Many an Abijah in whom some good toward the Lord God of Israel was found, has died in childhood. Often the hope of Christian parents has passed away amidst the bright blossoms of sanctified youth. Comparatively few arrive at three-score years and ten either in the Church or in the world. But it may be remarked generally that a religious course, particularly when early begun, has a tendency to prolong life. Oh! consider how many lives are abridged by sinful habits. Calculate the victims of *Intemperance*. When we speak of the mortality which it occasions, we refer not merely to those instances, in which, as with the stroke of a sword, it cuts off life. In num-

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berless instances besides, it enervates, undermines, and shatters the frame ; it sows the seeds of disease thick and wide ; it leads to the formation of irregular habits, and involves in embarrassment and strife. Consider the multitudes whose lives are shortened by evil passions : by anger, malice, revenge, avarice, ambition, pride. A religious course exempts from these. It fills the heart with peace ; it anoints the head as with fresh oil ; it dignifies what is lawful, and sweetens what is agreeable ; it spreads a ray over life, endears the domestic hearth, and softens the asperity of trial. And oh ! what a charm it imparts to the decay of age ! What a beauty it sheds on the evening sky of life ! What a venerable grace it lends to the hoary head ! In this way it lengthens the term of life, even as it increases its enjoyment. The length of life, too, it is also to be remembered, is not to be computed by the number of years, but by the mode in which these years have been spent. A holy life at thirty is longer than the life of some at eighty. Hence it has happened that Christians of eminent spiritual attainments, dying comparatively young, have been comparatively old. The body, it might be, still bore upon it the signs of youth ; not a wrinkle furrowed brow or cheek, the step was firm, the frame muscular, the eye bright. But the soul, early led to God, had ripened in excellencè. Heavenly graces had gathered around it. Beautiful virtues adorned the life. And thus the favoured Christian appeared, old in experience, though young in years ; rich in Divine knowledge, though poor in the wisdom of the world ; a model of holiness, though a stranger to the ways of man.

COMMUNION ADDRESS.

FENCING OF THE TABLES.

IN the kind Providence of God, and in keeping with the order of observance prescribed by our Church, we are again called to take our seats at the Communion Table. It is presumed that the solemn words now read (1 Cor. xi. 28, 29), with which the Apostle has fenced round, and guarded the sanctity of this interesting and delightful ordinance, of our holy religion, have been the topic of your frequent, and serious, and solemn contemplation ; and that, in compliance with his exhortation, you have examined into the state of your hearts and the tenor of your lives ; while, as the result of this examination, you have reached some measure of conviction, that though defective, you are sincere ; though compassed about with infirmity and sin, you really believe, and desire to be saved. It is presumed that the large number who are present this day, with a deliberate purpose to communicate, are more or less in this condition ; for, after the prayers and discourses and addresses bearing upon the duties of the Communion-Sabbath which you have heard, it were indeed very fearful to think that any could have continued so utterly careless and reckless as to allow this Sabbath to dawn, and this service to begin, without some earnest attempt at self-probation or self-examination. But in the moral world effects do not follow causes with the same unvarying constancy as in the natural ; the considerations and motives which we might sup-

pose most likely to produce particular effects, often utterly fail in doing so, and not unfrequently men exhibit a deportment the very reverse of that which, considering their circumstances and knowledge, we might rationally and justly expect. It is possible that, notwithstanding the awfully solemn command, "But let a man examine himself;" notwithstanding the many earnest preparatory prayers and expostulations and appeals, there may be some now present with the design of communicating, whose hearts have never once been examined, who are profoundly ignorant of themselves, of their true character and state, and consequently devoid of the feelings and desires which it is calculated to awaken and excite. And in reference to such it is necessary that, even at this late period, a solemn appeal should be made on the subject of their qualification for this duty. Nor is it to be overlooked that even where there have been previous earnest attempts at self-examination, the awful solemnity of this duty requires and renders it imperative that the grounds and the results of these should be once more considered,—that the mind may be thus put into a proper frame for those exercises of penitence and faith, of love, gratitude and hope, to which in communion, it is called; that the devout may be refreshed, the downcast comforted, the timid encouraged, and, in short, all confirmed. It is therefore highly expedient that immediately before the serving of the table begins, while the mind is yet glowing with the truths brought before it in the sermon preached, and under their influence is opening to the sublimity and joy of the service which is to follow—the materials of self-examination should be briefly reviewed, the importance of the duty earnest-

Communion Address.

ly enforced, and the danger of neglecting it, affectingly held out. Let me ask you then, are you prepared for this duty? Do you possess the qualifications without which it is worse than a useless service, and must be infinitely criminal and offensive to God? Your comfort now, your progress hereafter, depends much on an affirmative answer to these questions. In attempting to frame an answer to them, let me guard you against the self-deception which, in all questions regarding our spiritual condition, is so apt to blind and mislead. We are prone, in judging ourselves, to mistake impressions for convictions, and feelings for habits; to suppose a momentary or occasional seriousness to be true piety, and to put the solemnity of a communion season, which is too often the offspring of mere ephemeral circumstances, to the account of a lively faith and spiritual desires. The question now is, are we Christians? the true followers of the Lamb? In proposing this question to your serious consideration, we would set up no lofty and unattainable standard,—we would not say that unless you be seraphic as Paul, celestial as John, or ardent as Peter, we cannot invite you to the Sacramental Table. Were such the standard by which we were to be tested, who among us would dare to approach? No. While Christianity is sublime in its precepts, magnificent and splendid in its examples, it yet deals rationally with man, and recognizes as its proper and legitimate subjects, all in whom the principles which it enjoins, and the affections which it recommends exist, though it should only be in small and imperfect measure. Most assuredly it requires sincerity—a decision in its own favour, fixed desires after the excellence it demands, and habitual and

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untiring efforts to attain that excellence. But if these exist, though amidst much sinfulness and short-coming, though so extremely feeble as at times to lead us to doubt their existence at all, then the Gospel holds out encouragement to the smoking flax and the bruised reed, despises not the day of small things, and says with a voice of the most soothing tenderness to each, "Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" We cannot delineate at this time the Christian character, in all its rich and varied features; it is a vastly comprehensive and beautiful theme; and time would fail for its delineation, but some of its leading features we may briefly state. And *First*, the true Christian is a man who has been awakened to feel that he is guilty and, by nature, under condemnation, sinful and unable to overcome and renounce sin; that salvation from sin, both in its penalty and in its power is essential to his peace here and his happiness hereafter; that this salvation can only be obtained through faith in the Son of God, as having in our nature fulfilled and endured the penalty, and now exalted above all heavens, that He may intercede on His throne, and preside as Supreme Head over the government of the world for the great ends of salvation. He is one who believes in Christ, as infinitely able and willing to secure his pardon and acceptance, to renew, comfort and sanctify by His Spirit, and who makes a cordial profession of subjection to Christ, obeying His laws, honouring His institutions, and copying His example. May I be permitted to appeal to all intending communicants, and say, is this in any measure your character? We are aware that uniformity of exei-

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lence among the members of the Church is neither to be expected nor found, and that we have no Scriptural authority to look for it or to require it. But the principles and dispositions from which that excellence springs, must be the same in all, weaker or stronger, more or less obstructed in their operation and development? Have you felt, and do you still feel, that you are guilty before God, under the condemnation of His law, and unable to arrest that evil? There once was a time when you did not feel this; when your relation to God awoke no interest, and never formed the subject of serious consideration. But you were gradually awakened to it; and now, does a sense of guilt oppress your minds, if amongst this number? Are you sensibly, tremblingly alive to the awful fact that you have violated the Divine law, and incurred its fearful penalty; and that it is not possible for you, by any sacrifice or effort, to avert what you feel to be unutterably dreadful? Associated with this, are you penetrated at the same time with an overwhelming sense of the power of sin in your hearts; of your own utter impotency and inability to offer effectual resistance to it, and of its baneful effect in disqualifying you for the service and enjoyment of God? Does it seem to you that it has deprived you of your highest privileges, your purest pleasures, and your proper rank; and that it is to you a matter of infinite moment that its dominion should be overthrown, the evils which it occasions removed, and the exercises and pleasures from which it excludes you, secured and enjoyed? Is it thus hateful, infinitely odious in its own nature, a constant cause of sorrow and lamentation, while salvation from it is invested in your estimation with an

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interest and a grandeur, paramount and supreme.

We refer to these things as lying at the basis of the Christian character, forming the radical element on which it rests. There is a structure, however, to be reared upon them; and, apart from that structure, they are little worth. They are merely the cry of one in immediate and awful danger, who sees and feels that he is on the verge of death and eternity. But as that cry would be utterly useless unless it was followed by instant and energetic action, with a view to escape from the impending calamity, so neither would the conviction of guilt and sinfulness be of the least value if it did not dispose and prompt the sinner to avail himself of that glorious and gracious scheme of salvation, which the Gospel unfolds and brings to our view. The chief design of conviction of sin, indeed, is to lead to the foot of the cross! We must look to the bleeding victim, we must rely on the blood shed, we must trust implicitly to the wisdom of the great arrangement by which God is just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. We must seek our peace from the atoning blood of the cross exclusively. We must shun every other offer of peace as utterly delusive. We must cling to the cross and be attracted and magnetized by its beauties and its glories. We must be assured that there is no safety except at the foot of that cross, and no salvation but in Him who hung and died upon it. Is it in some measure so with you? Awakened to a sense of your danger as appalling, have you looked to Christ to avert it? Have you turned away from the suggestions of a self-righteous spirit within, and the delusions of a heartless and godless world without, and has the conviction been lodged in your

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bosom, and been cherished within you, that here, hid in the blood of this wondrous atonement, is the peace you want—the only peace that can fill your hearts? Has any measure of that peace tranquilized your minds? Have you felt that it is no longer with you as it once was, when you were either slumbering in a spiritual death which no dispensations of providence could disturb, or when your minds were restless and excited, operated upon by fears which you could not dismiss, and by doubts from which there was no escape? Do you now enjoy any measure of conviction that the ground of your security is Scriptural and permanent, and that, if grace is only given to enable you to cling to it, you will not, you cannot be moved? But we said that the true Christian was one who professed to be subject to Christ, obeying His laws, honoring His institutions, and copying His example. The regeneracy of his nature to which grace has awakened him, does not appear in superficial impressions, and evanescent feelings, and occasional desires. It has impressions peculiar to itself, but these are permanent; feelings peculiar to itself, but these are habitual; desires peculiar to itself, but these are influential and progressive. The sense of need is not confined to the guilt, it reaches to the power of sin; and hence, the true Christian not only believes in Christ as a Saviour, but submits to Him as a King, conforms to the laws of His kingdom, and strives to resemble His image. Here there can be no mistakes. This, by the very constitution of our nature, is the proper and conclusive evidence of spiritual principle: “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Grapes upon the thorn, or figs upon the thistle would not be more surprising than obedience to

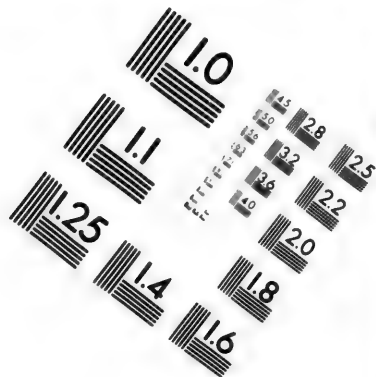
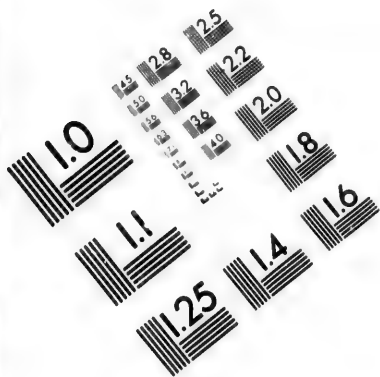
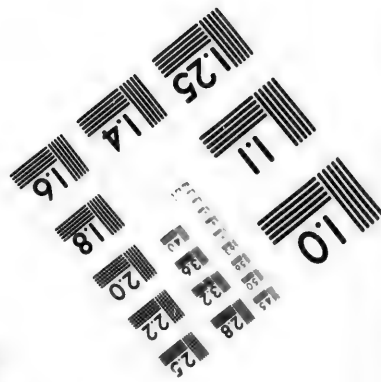
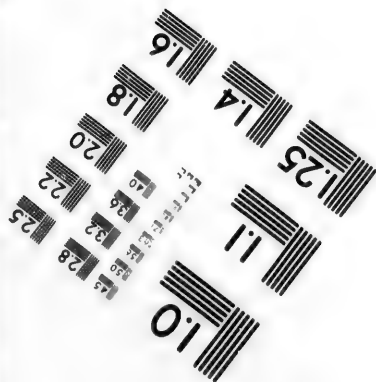
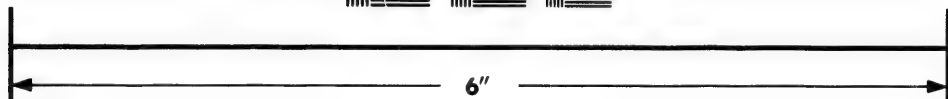
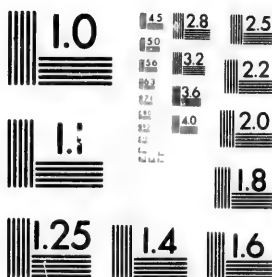


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Christ, zeal for His honor, or the imitation of His excellence, in the unrenewed man. Do these, in any manner, distinguish you? We have already said we do not ask for superlative and peerless attainments, for finished character and stainless lives. But there must be some fruit? Do you constrain men to take knowledge of you that you have been with Christ? Is His law in your minds, as a rule; His example, as a model; His honor, His glory, as an end the most sacred and sublime? There are not a few professing Christians who rarely think of Christ, and never with any peculiar emotions of confidence and joy, who regulate their lives solely by worldly maxims, who never say to themselves "Christ has commanded this, and it must be done; or Christ has forbidden this, and it must be shunned." With the exception of a few religious observances, an occasional perusal of a passage of Scripture, or a few superficial expressions of reverence; there is nothing to distinguish them from those who have never become the professed disciples of Christ, learned His law or become familiar with His history. Could you denominate such, Christians; or, have you any the least impression that Christ is acknowledged by them as Law-giver and King; that His example is ever before them, to quicken, excite and animate them to pursue the course of duty and of life? Unquestionably not. If Christ be King, He must receive corresponding homage. There must be loyalty to His person, admiration of His law, submission to His government, reverence for its institutions, and interest in its prosperity. Apart from these, acknowledgment of His royalty were useless and worse than useless, being disingenuous and hypocritical.

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Let me then, here, most seriously admonish you. We rest short of nothing but obedience to Christ, as a proof of your sincerity in acknowledging His authority and claims. We look not for the purity of the loftiest saints that have ever lived, we look not for the zeal of seraphim, but we look for honesty in Christian profession, consistency in Christian practice, familiarity with the law which you admit to be supreme, and imitation of the model which you consider to be perfect. None who neglect Christ's ordinances, who are careless and irregular in perusing His Word, who can think without gratitude of His work, or speak without joy of its fruits, who can look with indifference on the progress of His cause, be utterly unimpressed with its triumphs, and, in their whole system of action have little or no respect to His law,—none of this description can be Christians in deed, and consequently cannot be true communicants, and sit down acceptably at the table of Jesus Christ. We wish no pompous display of zeal, no unnecessary formal profession of an interest in eternal things, no loud or high-sounding declaration of your devotedness to the Saviour's cause; but we want the evidence of sincerity, which one man requires from another; deeds to substantiate words; and, of course, a system of life somewhat in keeping with the Christian's vocation and character. If Christ be loved, He will be obeyed; if He be admired, He will be imitated; if He be the object of your confidence, He must and will be precious. In looking into the state of your own hearts, and searching and trying your past ways, many among you may feel that you do not possess the character as now described, and may be constrained to confess that

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there have been occasions on which, notwithstanding your professions, you did not give to Christ the obedience that was His due. Now, let it be distinctly observed, that among sincere Christians it would be out of place to expect the same attainments and knowledge. Though you be comparatively ignorant, unsteady and defective as members of the Church; though the holiness of the Christian character seem to you almost unattainable, and your timid hearts are yielding to despair, yet, come in the spirit of repentance and prayer to the table of your Lord, and your hearts will be comforted and your faith confirmed. Jesus Christ now stands at the head of the table and cries aloud as He did of old on the great day of the feast: "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." Come, then, though shrinkingly and tremblingly, yet profoundly penitential, and you will receive the most satisfactory tokens of pardon and grace; your doubts will be dispelled, and your darkness removed, and the Lord your God will arise in the brightness of His glory, to revive your drooping hearts, and to satisfy your souls with good. This is the marriage feast of His Son; He has prepared His dinner; the oxen and the tattlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come unto the marriage. Encouraging invitation. His guests are the maimed, the halt, the blind, the miserable, the ignorant and the poor; and ample as the table is, and crowded as is the scene of entertainment, not a guest need retire with an unsatisfied heart or a dejected look. All, looking to Christ and depending upon Him, shall be satisfied, and gladdened, and blessed. In some the principles of religion have been longer cherished and more assiduously culti-

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vated than in others. Some have been much more highly favored than others by the privileges and opportunities they have enjoyed, and there must be different degrees in the improvement of the character, and the exercise of spiritual dispositions. But, in all, faith is a principle, and is productive of fruit. The fruit is more or less luxuriant as the tree which bears it is vigorous and healthy. Do not be deterred, therefore, from coming to the communion table, because the fruits and evidences of your faith are not so striking and ample as they appear in the conduct and experience of some other Christian professor. Be jealous of yourselves, doubtless, but do not yield to unreasonable doubt or groundless suspicion. Do not suffer a sense of weakness and deficiency to oppress and overwhelm you. If you have the smallest faith in operation, if you have anything like satisfactory evidence of the Spirit's influence, you have reason to thank God and take courage; and rest assured that in Christ there is an infinite fulness, and that united to Him, and complete in Him, you will be accepted and be sanctified and saved for ever and ever.

CATECHETICAL EXERCISE.

ON THE FINAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Q. Will the resurrection of the dead be followed by the general judgment? A. Yes.—Q. Will there be a visible appearance of Jesus Christ? A. Yes.—Q. Who will be His ministers? A. The angels.—Q. Will saints and sinners, now mingled together in the common offices of life, and connected by various ties, be then parted for ever? A. Yes. Matt. xxv. 32–33.—Q. Are these words commonly understood in a literal sense? A. Yes.—Q. But does a literal interpretation accord with our other conceptions of the grand assize? A. No.—Q. As the saints are to be caught up to meet Him in the air, can the position of the two parties, on the right and left hand, be easily conceived? A. No.—Q. May we regard it, therefore, as a figurative description? A. Yes.—Q. What may the place at the right hand, which will be assigned to the righteous, signify? A. The station of honor which they will occupy.—Q. Is this the general idea which that situation suggests in Scripture? A. Yes.—Q. Must it be so understood in the case of Christ who is said to sit at the right hand of His Father? A. Yes.—Q. Why so? A. Because the Father has no right hand, but has exalted Jesus “far above all principalities and powers.”—Q. Are we informed in the Revelation of John, that the books were opened? A. Yes.—Q. Is it out of the Book of Life that the saints will be judged? A. Yes.—Q. May we understand by this book, either the Gospel or the Divine decree by which they were appointed to salvation?

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A. Yes.—Q. Are they amenable to the law, as the rule of justification and condemnation? A. No; they have been delivered from it by Jesus Christ.—Q. Will any enquiry be necessary for the satisfaction of the Judge? A. No.—Q. But will it be necessary for the great design of the general judgment? A. Yes.—Q. What is that design? A. The manifestation of His righteousness in the final allotment of the human race.—Q. Will all be perfectly satisfied that it is not by an arbitrary decision that heaven is assigned to them in preference to others? A. Yes.—Q. Will the sentence be founded on reasons which accord with the rectitude of the Divine administration? A. Yes.—Q. Will evidence be exhibited of the validity of their title? A. Yes.—Q. Will this evidence be furnished by their works? A. Yes; Matt. xxv. 34-36.—Q. Is it evident to every person who understands his Bible, that the works of the saints are here mentioned, not as the foundation, but as the evidence of their title? A. Yes.—Q. But while it appears that the good works of the saints will be exhibited in the day of judgment, will any mention be made of their sins? A. This is a question about which those who have deemed it worthy of attention, are divided in sentiment.—Q. What arguments have been urged by such as maintain that they will not be mentioned? A. That there is no reference to them in the account which our Lord gives of the general judgment in the Gospel of Matthew; that the remission of them is expressed in such terms as imply that they are henceforth to be forever concealed, for they are “cast into the depths of the sea, and are to be remembered no more;” that it is not compatible with the character of the Judge, who is also the propitiation for

their sins, to suppose that He will bring them to light in a manner so public; and that, notwithstanding their full acquittal, we could not conceive the saints not to be affected with shame, if their crimes, the recollection of which has often made them blush, were exposed to the view of the universe.—Q. What are the arguments adduced in opposition to these? A. It is said that according to Scripture, “God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil;” that justice seems to require that there should be an impartial review of the conduct of each individual; that to recall the memory of the sins of the saints will display the virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, and the riches of the grace of God, through which they have been pardoned; that, in many cases the sins of the wicked could not be published without the publication of theirs, as they were associated in the same deeds; that some of them are already made public in the Scriptures, and are held up as a spectacle to all generations; and that no feeling of shame would be excited because God has fully remitted their trespasses, and they glory in the righteousness of Christ with which they are adorned.—Q. Is there some force in the arguments on both sides? A. Yes.—Q. Is it easy to determine which is the more powerful? A. No.—Q. Is the question, however, more of a curious than of a profitable kind? A. Yes.—Q. Would anything be gained or lost by a decision in either way? A. No.—Q. But without pretending to determine this question, may we rest assured that there will be a general reference to the particular sins of the saints? A. Yes.—Q. Will it then be universally understood that they were once sinners,

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and were pardoned solely through Divine mercy? A. Yes.—Q. Will it be an important part of the transactions of the last day, to publish the sentence of acquittal in the ears of angels and men? A. Yes.—Q. Is their title to the favour of God often doubtful to themselves amidst the darkness of the present state? A. Yes.—Q. Are their fears, however, dispelled either before they die, or immediately after their spirits enter into the presence of God? A. Yes.—Q. Is their title to this favour disputed by others, and are the grounds on which it rests accounted visionary? A. Yes.—Q. Is their faith derided as a mere caprice, and the doctrine of imputed righteousness pronounced a mere chimera? A. Yes.—Q. Will the decision of the last day put an end forever to these suspicions and accusations? A. Yes.—Q. Whither will the saints go, after being openly acknowledged and acquitted? A. To heaven.—Q. What do you mean by heaven? A. That region of the universe in which angels and the spirits of the just now dwell, and all the righteous shall be finally assembled.—Q. Where is its location? A. We know not.—Q. Do we speak of it in common language as being above us? A. Yes.—Q. But is this phrase used in conformity to a notion founded upon the appearance of the visible heavens? A. Yes.—Q. Will what is above us at this moment, be beneath us twelve hours hence? A. Yes.—Q. Wherefore? A. In consequence of the revolution of the earth.—Q. Does what is beneath us seem to be above to those who are on the opposite side of the globe? A. Yes.—Q. Does it seem warrantable, however, to conclude that it lies beyond the limits of the visible creation? A. Yes.—Q. How does this

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appear? A. For Jesus Christ who is now in it, is said to have ascended "above all heavens."—Q. What do you mean by "all heavens" here? A. The aerial and starry heavens according to the Jewish division of the superior regions.—Q. Is it obviously local? A. Yes.—Q. Does Scripture uniformly suppose that there is a particular place, which is appointed to be the final abode of the righteous? A. Yes.—Q. Can we form any definite ideas of the *ubi* of spirits? A. No.—Q. Will all the saints, however, after the general Judgment be clothed with a material frame? A. Yes.—Q. How does it appear, then, that Heaven must be material? A. Because it is inhabited by our blessed Saviour, and Enoch and Elijah, and the saints who came out of their graves after the resurrection of Christ, and will be inhabited hereafter by the myriads whom He will raise to life at His second coming.—Q. Can we form any conjectures concerning the nature of the place? A. No.—Q. Are the Bible descriptions of it, obviously, of a highly metaphorical character? A. Yes.—Q. Have we reason to believe that Heaven is vastly superior to what the earth was, even before its loveliness was impaired by the curse? A. Yes.—Q. How does it seem reasonable to suppose that it will be totally different from the earth? A. Because the beings who inhabit it, although men, will be entirely changed in respect of the constitution of their bodies.—Q. When we are told in Rev. xxii. 1, 2, that a river flows in it, and that trees grow upon its banks, what are the ideas suggested by that imagery? A. Those of beauty, refreshment, and abundance.—Q. Is it likewise represented to us in Rev. xxi. 19-21, 23-25, under the

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splendid image of a city of pure gold, whose foundations and gates are composed of precious stones?

A. Yes.—Q. Will there be visible tokens in Heaven of the presence of God? A. Yes.—Q. How does He

manifest Himself upon earth? A. Not only by impressions upon the minds of His intelligent creatures, but by displays of His perfections in the splendour of the heavens, and the various processes which are going on above us, and around us.—Q.

May we, therefore, believe that He will manifest Himself in Heaven, both by a secret intercourse with the souls of the saints, and by such external signs as will show that He is near, and that it is His temple and His palace? A. Yes.—Q. Will all the magni-

ficence and beauty which we admire in the universe be here blended with beauty and magnificence of which we can form no idea? A. Yes.—

Q. Will it be the noblest material work of His Almighty hand? A. Yes.—Q. Have some pro-

posed the absurd question whether, in this blessed abode the saints will know one another? A. Yes.—Q.

Would it be any part of their perfection to have all their former ideas obliterated, and to meet as strangers in the other world? A. No.—Q. Could any-

thing be gained by such ignorance? A. No.—Q.

But would much be lost? A. Yes.—Q. What would be lost by it? A. They would lose all the happi-

ness of meeting again, on the peaceful shore, those from whom they were separated by the storms of

life; of seeing among the trophies of Divine grace, many of whom they had despaired, and for whose

sakes they had gone down with sorrow to the grave; of knowing the good which they had been honoured

to do, and being surrounded with the individuals

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who had been saved by means of their prayers, and instructions, and labours.—Q. Could those whom the minister of the Gospel had been instrumental in converting and edifying be to him a crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord, if he did not recognize them when standing at his side? A. No.—Q. While the saints will be free from the turbulence of passion, will their innocent affections still remain? A. Yes.—Q. Could they spend eternal ages without asking and endeavouring to ascertain whether those in whom they were deeply interested while upon earth, are in heaven? A. No.—Q. And constituted as they now are, can we conceive them to be happy upon the supposition that no answer could be returned to such a question? A. No.—Q. Have some likewise supposed that Heaven would be a state of solitary enjoyment? A. Yes.—Q. Has it been said that the saints will be so absorbed in the contemplation and enjoyment of God, that they will not need the society of others, and will be insensible to their presence? A. Yes.—Q. But while it must be granted that God alone is sufficient to the happiness of His creatures, and will be the chief good, is it not reasonable to think that much of the happiness of Heaven will spring from the society of each other? A. Yes.—Q. Has God promised to His people a kind of Heaven suitable to their nature? A. Yes.—Q. Will the relations now existing amongst men, which are dissolved at death, be renewed in the eternal world? A. No.—Q. Will the general relation, however, of a common descent and a common nature, strengthened by the relation arising from a common redemption, still remain? A. Yes.—Q. Will the love, moreover, which is implied in such re-

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lations as father and son, husband and wife, still remain? A. Yes.—Q. While human nature will be purified and exalted, will it be essentially changed? A. No.—Q. Could we without such a change, conceive its present tendency to union and fellowship with others to cease? A. No.—Q. Could man, unless he became a totally different being, be perfectly happy in absolute solitude? A. No.—Q. Can we conceive all his desires to be concentrated upon his Maker, without being previously assured that he will receive a new constitution? A. No.—Q. Should love to his fellow-men remain, would it not according to this hypothesis, be superfluous and useless? A. Yes.—Q. Can we conceive of the family of Heaven, or of any other family, as being most intimately connected, and yet holding no correspondence? A. No.—Q. Is the heaven which God has promised to His people positively represented as a state of society? A. Yes.—Q. Are its inhabitants the very same persons who were congregated into one body upon earth and united in the same faith and love and worship? A. Yes.—Q. If thus united upon earth, can we conceive of them as separated in Heaven? A. No.—Q. How does Revelation describe Heaven? A. John xiv. 2.—Q. What does this description naturally suggest? A. That Heaven is furnished with every accommodation; that there all those comforts will be found which we usually enjoy in a house.—Q. What are these? A. Rest, peace, society and friendship.—Q. Are they represented in Rev. vii. 9, 10, as not only standing before the Throne, but as engaged in the same service of adoration and thanksgiving? A. Yes.—Q. Is it represented as the song of each by himself? A. No;

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but as the song of the mighty multitude of the redeemed.—Q. Will *they* meet and rejoice in heaven who, upon earth, went to the House of God in company? A. Yes.—Q. Will they likewise meet, who never met before, and hail one another as brethren? A. Yes.—Q. What is represented to be the employment of the saints in Heaven? A. The praising of God.—Q. Will everyone feel his infinite obligations to Divine grace, and experience ineffable delight in expressing them? A. Yes.—Q. Will there be vocal praise in heaven after the resurrection? A. There may.—Q. Can we suppose that praise will be their only and perpetual exercise? A. No.—Q. Having minds to contemplate as well as hearts to love God, may we not conclude that a portion of their happy existence will be diverted to the survey of the glorious manifestations of His attributes, and the review of His wonderful works? A. Yes.—Q. Will they engage in conversation with their redeemed brethren, upon subjects in which they all feel a rapturous interest? A. Yes.—Q. Will they listen with delight to the moral history of each other? A. Yes.—Q. Will their hearts glow more and more with admiration and love while, in every new tale, they see new displays of Divine wisdom and goodness? A. Yes.—Q. But is it exceedingly little that we can possibly conceive of the celestial intercourse of saints? A. Yes.—Q. Are we ignorant whether language will be used in heaven as the vehicle of thought, or some new medium of communication be established? A. Yes.—Q. Are we still more profoundly ignorant of the manner in which intercourse will be maintained between men who have bodily senses and organs, and angels who are in corporeal beings? A. Yes.—Q.

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But are we expressly assured that angels and men will be united in one holy society, and dwell together in perfect friendship for ever and ever? A. Yes.—Q. Will they reciprocate happiness? A. Yes.—Q. Wherein, however, will the supreme happiness of man in heaven consist? A. In the enjoyment of God.—Q. How does this appear? A. From the consideration that his chief end is the glory of God.—Q. Is this the view of all regenerated men? A. Yes.—Q. Why is heaven the object of their hope? A. Because, in that place, their desires for His presence and the full communication of His love will be gratified, (Psalm lxxiii. 25).—Q. Why does our Lord pronounce the pure in heart to be blessed? A. For they shall see God, (Matt. v. 8).—Q. How do you reconcile the apparent contradictions between His words and those of one who calls Him the blessed and only Potentate, that “no man hath seen or can see Him?” A. The one speaks of mental and the other of corporeal vision.—Q. Will any man see Him by way of corporeal vision, even in the future state? A. No.—Q. Why not? A. Because that although the bodies of the saints will be highly refined, it is physically impossible that a spirit should be perceived by natural organs.—Q. Does the Father dwell amidst inaccessible light? A. Yes.—Q. Is it incompatible with this statement to suppose a visible manifestation of His glory, similar to the symbol which appeared in the most holy place? A. No; because this would not be God Himself, but only a sign of His presence.—Q. Will the saints obtain in heaven a clear and comprehensive knowledge, when compared with the obscure and imperfect knowledge which they at present derive from His works and

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His Word? A. Yes, (1 Cor. xiii. 9-12).—Q. Can this language, emphatic though it be, be understood of an adequate knowledge? A. No.—Q. Why not? A. For an infinite being can be comprehended only by an infinite understanding?—Q. Will the knowledge of the future state be comparatively perfect? A. Yes; it will be free from all doubts and errors.—Q. Will knowledge there be acquired without effort or labour? A. Yes.—Q. While here we can see only the skirts of the Almighty's glory, will the revelation there be as ample as our finite faculties will permit? A. Yes.—Q. Will mysteries be explained, difficulties solved, and excellencies rise to view in the Divine nature, of which no vestige was discovered in His works? A. Yes.—Q. Can we well conceive the knowledge of the saints in heaven to be stationary? A. No.—Q. Why not? A. Because the Almighty cannot be sought out to perfection by the finite mind.—Q. Is it possible that the soul in the lapse of ages may reach the *ne plus ultra* of its knowledge? A. This may be possible, but by no means probable.—Q. Do we naturally judge of the future by the present state? A. Yes.—Q. Are we led, therefore, by analogy, judging from the gradual acquisition of knowledge here, to anticipate the soul's perpetual progression hereafter? A. Yes.—Q. May the Almighty so enlarge its powers, as that, in the infinitude of His nature, there will be new discoveries to be made for ever and ever? A. Yes.—Q. May all the wonders of creation be surveyed in the course of an eternal duration? A. Yes.—Q. But can the Almighty ever be fully understood? A. No.—Q. Will the knowledge of God in the future state be ever accompanied with love intense and

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supreme? A. Yes.—Q. Why so? A. For it is impossible to contemplate infinite excellence without thus loving it.—Q. Are there seasons even here, when the hearts of saints go out to God with an ardour which no created object can excite? A. Yes.—Q. Will this flame glow still more ardently in the pure atmosphere of heaven? A. Yes.—Q. Will love, which here struggles with the infirmity of the flesh, the reluctance of corrupt nature, the operations of selfishness, and the opposing influences of visible things, be then free and unfettered? A. Yes.—Q. Will the fervour of affection then ever abate? A. No.—Q. Will anything then ever occur to suspend it, or turn it into a different channel? A. No.—Q. Will God always maintain the pre-eminence and appear infinitely greater and better than all other beings? A. Yes.—Q. Will their love to other beings be in perfect harmony with supreme love to God? A. Yes.—Q. Will it flow from this exalted source and be attracted by its image as impressed upon them in all its loveliness and glory? A. Yes.—Q. Have some ancient philosophers imagined that after death the souls of men were absorbed by the Divine essence from which they had originally emanated? A. Yes.—Q. Will there be a union of the most intimate kind between God and the soul in the future state? A. Yes.—Q. How is this union effected? A. By the purest and most active mutual love.—Q. Will they rejoice in God as He is, and will every power be devoted to Him alone? A. Yes.—Q. Is love adapted to every condition of our nature, and does it constitute its moral perfection? A. Yes; (1 Cor. xiii. 8-13).—Q. Why will faith and hope be unnecessary in the world to come?

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A. Because the object of the one is seen, and that of the other is enjoyed.—Q. Will the happiness of the saints in heaven arise from the absence of all the causes of pain and sorrow, to the operation of which they are at present exposed; from the presence of the highest possible good, and from the certainty of the perpetual possession of it? A. Yes; (Rev. xxi. 4).—Q. Are sin and suffering connected as cause and effect? A. Yes.—Q. But will the inhabitants of heaven be sinless, and therefore beyond the reach of suffering? A. Yes.—Q. Will affliction and sorrow be for ever unknown and unfelt in that blessed region? A. Yes.—Q. Will reflection upon all past evils serve only to heighten the contrast, and to give them a more lively feeling of their present enjoyments? A. Yes.—Q. Will they to whom death made this world a blank mourn no more? A. Yes.—Q. Will they either find those whom they bewailed in the better country, or far better friends? A. Yes.—Q. Have they any will but the will of God? A. No.—Q. Have those whom He does not love, ceased to be the objects of their regard? A. Yes; (Rev. xxi. 4).—Q. While exempted from all evil, are they put in possession of the greatest possible good? A. Yes.—Q. What is that good? A. It is God Himself, who is their everlasting reward.—Q. Is it possible for man to be happy, in a state of separation from God? A. No.—Q. Would the whole rational creation, if abandoned by Him, wither and die as the vegetable creation, when the rain and dew of heaven are withheld? A. Yes.—Q. Is it the place alone which will make the wicked miserable? A. No.—Q. Is it because they will see God afar off, being banished from His gracious presence, and separated from

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Him by an impassable gulf? A. Yes.—Q. What is it that constitutes heaven? A. It is the presence of God?—Q. Do the saints there see Him as He is, and hold with Him an intimate uninterrupted and everlasting communion? A. Yes.—Q. Will this felicity be heightened by the knowledge that it is everlasting? A. Yes.—Q. Is there any apprehension of evil in heaven? A. No.—Q. Does it, while we are here, disturb our best hours? A. Yes.—Q. How is it excited? A. Partly by the suggestions of conscience and partly by an experience of the vicissitudes of human affairs.—Q. Are the joys of religion equally subject to mutation as those of a temporal nature? A. Yes.—Q. How so? A. Either because the saints are not at all times disposed to receive them, and by the unhappy influence of unbelief, they are excluded from their souls; or because God is pleased to suspend them for the trial of their faith, and the chastisement of their sins.—Q. Is the state of heaven totally different? A. Yes.—Q. Will the duration of the saints in heaven bring any change of circumstances? A. No; it will resemble that of the sun and stars which are fixed in the same point of space, and shine with undiminished splendour.—Q. Would the very possibility of an end mar the felicity of the righteous? A. Yes.—Q. But is it an eternal redemption of which Jesus Christ is the author? A. Yes.—Q. What is the last change which saints experience? A. Death; or perhaps more properly, the resurrection, when the separate spirits will be again embodied.—Q. Will they then enter upon a career which will never be finished? A. Yes.—Q. Will there be any night in that bright world? A. No; no literal or natural

night of darkness; no mental night of ignorance and error; no moral night of sin; and no penal night of sorrow and affliction. (Isa. lx. 19-20).—Q. Has the question been often agitated, whether there will be different degrees of glory in heaven? A. Yes.—Q. Is this a question more curious than useful? A. Yes.—Q. What are the various reasons adduced by those who adopt the negative view? A. That all the saints are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and being equal in this respect, have a title to an equal reward; that they all stand in the same relation to God, as His children are all the first-born, and will therefore receive the same inheritance; that it would seem an imperfection if one of them had less glory than another, and the former might conceive something better than he actually possessed, and be disturbed by an anxious desire for it; that our Saviour has promised to all a kingdom, and has said that they shall shine forth as the sun; and that, while speaking of a difference among them, we use words to which no distinct meaning can be annexed, as it is granted that all will be perfect.—Q. What are the arguments urged by those who adopt the positive side of the question? A. They appeal to different degrees of grace in this world, from which they infer that there will be different degrees of glory in the next; they grant that all saints will be perfectly happy, but compare them to vessels of different sizes which are all full, although some contain a greater quantity than others; and they support themselves by several passages of Scripture, as the parable of the talents, in which the servants are recompensed according to their diligence; the declaration of Paul that "he who soweth sparingly, shall

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reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully;" and of Daniel, that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."—Q. With respect to the last passage, must the supposed difference in the degree of splendor be considered as imaginary till it is shewn what is meant by "the brightness of the firmament," and that it is inferior to the brightness of the stars; and till it be proved that something more is intended than simply to convey by a variety of phrases the general idea of glory? A. Yes.—Q. Has the passage in 1 Cor. xv. 41 been quoted in favour of this opinion by those who attended to the sound without thinking of the sense? A. Yes.—Q. Will any intelligent person who reads the passage perceive that the apostle is speaking of a totally different subject? A. Yes.—Q. What is the subject to which he refers? A. The difference between the present and the future bodies of the saints, and is illustrating it by the different appearances which matter assumes in the plastic hand of the Almighty.—Q. Would the discussion of this question serve any valuable purpose? A. No.—Q. Whether the final allotment of the saints shall be equal or unequal, will all be content, and will all rejoice with joy unspeakable? A. Yes.